A STUDY OF A DISTRICT REFORM RATIONALE AND RESPONSE

Doris Dean Downing

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Doctoral Committee

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Samantha M. Paredes Scribner, Ph. D.

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Gary M. Crow, Ph. D.

_____

Paula Magee, Ph. D.

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To God, my family (husband, children, grandchildren, and siblings), the sisters at Marian University, and friends for their prayers, love, support, and encouragement throughout my life and academic career, I dedicated this accomplishment

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The mandates of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965 and 2015, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001, and the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015 are reminders that educational organizations must ensure all students meet academic achievement requirements. These mandates and the changing demographics at Creekpoint School District (CSD) caused district leaders to look at school reform plans that would address their concerns of shifting demographics, low student achievement particularly for ther students of color), and isolated radial pockets throughout the eleven elementary buildings in the district.

This study examined the district's approach to justifying the reform and the stakeholder response to this approach. The research found that district leavers approached the district reform in line with Rorrer, Skrla, & Scheurich's (2008), characteristics of institutional actors in educational reform, centering issues of equality and increasing segregation. Stakeholder input revealed that those were in fact problematic, as resisters to the proposed redesign employed arguments aligned with DiAngelo's description of White Fragility (DiAngelo, 2011), arguing they were being victimized, that their children's schools would deteriorate in quality and that they should be entitled to remind in the single elite magnet program.

Samantha M. Paredes Scribner, Ph.D.

Gary Crow, Ph.D.

Paula Magee, Ph.D.

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Chapter 1: Overview of the Research

Introduction

This chapter explains the purpose and the significance of the study, the terms used throughout the dissertation, the conceptual frameworks, and the research questions. The primary research question was, "How did the district leaders make a case for school reform?" This dissertation examined the approach the Redesign Plan had on the Creekside School District's (CSD) goals to increase academic achievement for all students and to reduce minority isolation throughout the eleven elementary buildings. This study offered a descriptive account of the narratives (surveys and comment cards) of school reform with a focus on the involvement of key stakeholders (families, school board members, and educators in the district).

Why the Redesign Program?

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) supported by President Johnson in 1965 and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB; 2001-2007) supported by President Bush in 2001 were federal education accountability policies directing school districts to meet goals for student achievement based on overall student performance and subgroup performance. These subgroups were disaggregated by race, socio-economic status (free, reduced, and paid lunch), English as Second Language Learners (ESL), and special education. These acts adopted the guarantee that all students meet state standards. These mandated accountability acts for all schools in the United States put pressure on districts with low student achievement. These accountability systems brought attention to student achievement and student improvement. If student achievement and improvement were declining for any group of students, central office leaders were more likely to reexamine the culture, routines, curriculum, and structure of the schools in their district to correct and improve these declines (Finnigan & Daly, 2012).

The mandates of ESEA and NCLB, and now more recently the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015, were reminders that leaders working in educational organizations must ensure all students meet academic achievement requirements. Successful educational leaders were expected to be proficient at identifying areas in which they could influence programs that support improved student achievement for all children. Therefore, one of the most crucial decisions a school district could make was the implementation of a new program (Stein, 2004). The mandates from the acts above, and the changing demographics of the CSD caused district leaders to look at school reform plans that would address their concerns of shifting demographics, low student achievement (particularly for students of color), and isolated racial pockets throughout the eleven elementary schools in the district.

The suburban CSD was looking more like an urban fringe school district in demographics. Frankenberg and Orfield (2012) found urban fringe as areas once unique to urban districts now located in suburban areas

Frankenberg and Orfield (2012) found suburban schools in Texas, California, Florida, and Illinois were facing rapid racial and socio-economic changes with limited resources. There were high levels of segregation for Hispanic and Black families in the suburban rings around large cities, and the White populations were moving to the outermost rings much faster than the White population was growing. In addition to growing diversity, there was inequality in student achievement by race. The Population Reference Bureau (2006) reported the United States has seen an increase in suburban areas and roughly half of all Americans reside in suburban communities, up 38 percent from the 1970s. Included in that growth has been demographic changes. Suburban boundaries around Black central cities have become more diverse communities. Over half of all members of racial minority groups in large metro areas, now live

in the suburbs. While the American suburbs have become more racially diverse, they have also become more economically diverse (Frey, 2011; Siegel-Hawley, 2013). The CSD leaders found their suburban district going from majority White students to majority-minority students with more Hispanic and Black students than White students (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

The CSD's rapidly changing student population was mirrored across the country. Hardy (2006) said, "It should come to no surprise to anyone living in 21st century America, that the nation is getting more diverse not less. And, of course so were its public schools (p. 14)." The Harvard Civil Rights Project (2006) stated:

> Viewed in historical perspective, the nation's schools have gone through an astonishing transformation since the 1960s, changing from a country where more than four of every five students were White, to one of every five. Our nation's schools have a 58% White enrollment, which changes daily. Within a decade it is likely that there will be fewer than 50% White students in our public schools (p. 8).

Seven years ago, demographics in the CSD were 39.8% Black, 15.3% Hispanic, and 36.4% White, compared to the 2015-2016 school year with 44.4% Black, 20.4% Hispanic, and 26.9% White. In addition, several elementary schools within the district had isolated racial pockets. Those demographic changes caused district leaders to look at school reform plans that would address their concerns of shifting demographics, low student achievement (particularly for students of color), and isolated racial pockets throughout the eleven elementary buildings in the district. As a possible solution to address these concerns, the district leaders wrote and received an 11.8 million dollar federal grant to support their school reform plan. This school reform plan, The Redesign Plan had three goals (to improve student achievement, to reduce isolated racial pockets in the elementary buildings, and to offer a themed choice school options for all elementary families).

Understanding the need to improve the declining standardized test scores for students (especially students of color) and to reduce the isolated racial pockets in some schools, CSD implemented a new themed school choice program because the two magnet programs already in existence had high student achievement. The Redesign Plan was a solution to address those challenges documented in the federal grant while offering every elementary family a choice of a themed magnet elementary program for their children. As early as 2004 and continuing until the implementation of the Redesign Plan, CSD leaders voiced a commitment to closing the achievement gap for all students, not just the academic gaps between students of various racial and socioeconomic backgrounds but also the gap between every student and excellence (Focus, 2004).

The designers of the Redesign Plan reform plan believed giving elementary families school choice, and providing transportation to their choice school, would encourage families to select choice themed schools that reflected their children's interests and talents, reducing growing pockets of racial isolation, and rapid demographic shifts in neighborhood schools. The premise, noted in the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) grant was more choice programs, more satisfied parents and students, and happier students would make it easier to improve achievement for all students. If students were attending schools that supported their talents and interests, they would find it easier to learn leading to improved student achievement (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010). The successful history of the Science and Technology School and the Spanish Immersion School preceded the Redesign Plan. Both schools were successful for many years with high student achievement prior to the Redesign Plan. In addition to both schools having high student achievement, families had selected these

schools of choice for their children. Student achievement was a primary factor that led the district leadership to investigate increasing magnet offerings.

The Redesign Plan was executed after several months of discussion and input from the community with the number one goal of improving student achievement. Like other districts across the United States, this Midwestern school district looked at school reform through creating more magnet schools as a means of improving student achievement for all students regardless of ethnicity. The district leaders used the research of Bifulco, Cobb, and Bell (2009) that found parental choice has an effect on all student achievement. Frankenberg and Orfield (2012) found in their studies that families' participation rates in magnet schools were reflective of overall district enrollment by race and social class.

Schneider, Teske, and Marschall (2000) researched choice programs by the behaviors parents exhibited when faced with choice programs. They viewed parents as consumers of education and studied parents who chose private schools, as well as parents whose children were in public schools. Their research found that in districts with public school choice like CDS, parents who viewed schools as markets were less likely to leave for a private school.

As part of the Redesign Plan, CSD offered schools with themes that included Communication, Environment, International, Performing Arts, Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM), and Spanish Immersion. Those themed choice options gave opportunities for student movement according to students' interests and talents.

These themed choice options could also have a positive influence on reducing the isolated pockets of the student population caused by the neighborhood assignments. If families selected schools that reflected their children's talents and interest, and not their geographical neighbors, isolated pockets would be eliminated or at best, sparse (Magnet Schools Assistance

Program, 2010). The district believed if children were attending schools that reflected their interest and talents, learning would increase, leading to improved academic achievement for all students (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010; Bifulco, Cobb, & Bell, 2009). Fuller, Elmore and Orfield (1996) supported the same premise by reporting that choice advocates claimed that parental satisfaction and involvement with their child's schooling would rise when families were given a choice in where their children attend school.

The Assistant Superintendent of CSD reported to the local newspaper in December 2011:

> We have a racial achievement gap. The student population in [CSD] has changed rapidly. The white students are doing better than ever but our African-American and Hispanic students are not. This trend has been consistent over the past decade. In 2000, white students represented 64% of our enrollment. Now [CSD] has 42% white, 38% African-American and 11% Hispanic. That shift has not been without challenges. [Creekpoint] is confronting an increasingly troubling reality that has promoted the district to take an introspective look at how it educates its students
> (2011, p. A8).

Data from the Department of Education (DOE) revealed the White students had higher achievement than the African-American and Hispanic students. DOE data also revealed CSD was becoming more diverse.

Given that the district acknowledged there were achievement gaps between groups of students, a fundamental strategy for investigating what might be contributing to those challenges took place in the form of community forums, administrative meetings, and parent-faculty meetings. Comments from parents and community members who had been living in the CSD district addressed demographic changes (New families from the larger urban districts were purchasing homes in the newly developed Creekpoint neighborhoods.) taking place in the district.

Documentation from the pre-planning surveys from 2007-2009 also revealed that new families to the CSD were pleased about moving to a better school district with higher student

achievement than the district they were leaving. Many of the newer families in the CSD relocated from the larger urban city where student achievement in the city schools was low and declining.

CSD converted all its elementary schools to magnet schools, the only district in the country to do so, according to the MSAP.

Magnet Schools Assistance Program (2010) reported, “Launching more magnet schools was seen as a solution to combating the district’s racial and economic isolation, a way to reduce the achievement gap between students, and a means of giving parents more choices for public schools”, said the district’s magnet grant-project director (p.34). Understanding some schools in the district had lower socioeconomic status and isolated racial pockets, the choice option allowed all students regardless of race or socio-economic status (SES) to select a choice that offered a theme of their interest.

CSD had been successful with limited choice programs for several years. There were waiting lists for the two choice options already in place (Science and Technology, and Spanish Immersion). When CSD offered more choice programs, district leaders assumed families would be more satisfied and students would be happier, making it easier to improve achievement for all students (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

Fowler (2002) found the growth and debate over school choice was possibly the most controversial policy in education. Phillips, Hausman, and Larsen (2012) found, regarding educational equity, school choice options had the potential of giving all families a choice in where their children should attend school. Coleman and Hoffer (1987) reported that choice schooling created and enhanced the value of communities in and around schools.

Input from parents and community members from all economic levels and racial groups that reflected the district's enrollment, data from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis in 2006 in three phases, and the Lead and Learn–Leadership and Learning Center in 2008 were collected before applying for the MSAP grant. The Leadership and Learning Center was an organized group of district leaders, board members, and community members created with the goal of organizing written survey comments from stakeholders to present at scheduled board meetings and community forums. According to the Leadership and Learning Center (2008):

> The Creekpoint School District and the Leadership and Learning Center created a partnership that was committed to creating a community consensus to support improved academic achievement and equity. The partnership was designed to support broad policies with regard to enrollment and school identity for all schools (including, but not limited to, magnet programs, educational excellence, and equity). Ultimately, CSD believed every parent in CSD expected to send their children to a school that offered a special identity, exceptional quality, and a clear commitment to superior academic opportunities (p. 2).

The CSD Redesign Program was implemented in the fall of 2010-2011 with the help of a startup grant from MSAP. CSD leaders were aware the demand for school choice options had intensified over the past several decades (Scott, 2011). CSD was also aware that this demand remained a fundamental ingredient of a successful choice policy (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). Therefore, CSD offered all families choice options to help support improved student achievement for all of their students by implementing the Redesign Plan.

The Purpose and Significance of this Study

This study examined the CSD's approach to justifying their school reform plan (The Redesign Plan), and the stakeholders' response to their approach. The significance of this study was to offer an example for other school districts on how one Midwestern district with changing demographics addressed school reform with the goals of increasing student achievement for their

students of color, reducing isolated racial pockets, and offering choice options for all elementary families. To better understand how the CSD had changed, the researcher made a distinction between the terms urban and suburban (in the definition of terms section below) as CSD with its changing demographics, moved from a more urban and less suburban district over the last decade (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010). Noguero (2003) found many of the challenges associated with urban school districts are now found in some suburban areas.

In some of these suburban communities, educators believed that more of the standards-based reform that had dominated education policy for three decades would somehow address issues of racial change with a color-blind ideology (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2012). Students from different ethnic and socioeconomic levels might not report to school ready to learn with the same educational and social experiences as other students (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2003).

The significance of this study offered a multifaceted understanding of how one district developed and implemented school reform focused on equity and choice. The researcher used the frameworks of Rorrer, Skrla, and Scheurich (2008) on school reform and DiAngelo (2011) on Critical Whiteness to examine the actions of the players (both district and family). The researcher found that district leaders approached the district reform in line with Rorrer, Skrla, and Scheurich's (2008) characteristics of institutional actors in educational reform, centering issues of equity and increasing segregation. Yet, stakeholder input revealed that issues of equity and increasing segregation were in fact problematic. Resisters to the proposed redesign employed arguments aligned with DiAngelo's (2011) description of White Fragility, arguing they were being victimized, that their children's schools would deteriorate in quality, and that they should be entitled to remain in the single elite magnet program. The framework of Rorrer, et

al. was used to examine answers to research question one, and the framework of DiAngelo was used to examine answers to research question two.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- How did district leaders make a case for school reform?
- How did stakeholders' input compare to the district leaders' case for reform?

Conceptual Framework

This study utilized a two-pronged framework to examine the district rationale and approach to an equity-based reform and stakeholders' response to the reform plan. First, the researcher applied an institutional framework to understand the district's approach to the school reform. Rorrer, Skrla, and Scheurich's (2008) framework was used to organize the data and inform the data analysis when describing the rationale for the reform that Creekside School District (CSD) used to address the targeted goals (improve student achievement, decrease racial isolation in the elementary schools, and provide more choice for elementary families). DiAngelo's (2011) framework was used to organize the stakeholders' responses to the proposed reform. The researcher employed the concept of White Fragility (DiAngelo, 2011) when examining the comment cards from community forums. This allowed the researcher to examine the push back stakeholders levied to the equity-based proposals to redistribute resources and diminish racial isolation due to the existence of one elementary magnet school. Following a lengthy literature review, the researcher for this study felt the frameworks of Rorrer, et al. and DiAngelo had relative value for the examination of CSD's Redesign Plan.

Institutional Model of District Based Reform

The researcher examined CSD's school reform from the lens of the conceptual framework (Actors in Educational Reform) referenced by Rorrer, et al. (2008). Rorrer, et al.

studied many school districts (Texas, California, Florida, and Illinois) that were effective in increasing achievement for all students, and found these districts used four essential roles in their school reform models. The four essential roles displayed by school districts in their studies were providing instructional leadership, reorienting the organization, establishing policy coherence, and maintaining an equity focus. These four roles implemented by school districts in educational reform on effective schooling were used to examine a rationale for how the CSD approached their school reform plan in answering question number one: "How did the district leaders make a case for school reform?"

Providing instructional leadership.

The first essential role of districts in educational reform on effective schooling was 'Providing Instructional Leadership.' This role started with the research of Edmonds (1979) as one of seven cornerstones in schools he termed as effective. Cuban (1984) who extended the effective school research on instructional leadership noted the importance of the school superintendent being visible inside schools, understanding curriculum, and asking questions about instruction. Greenfield (1987) wanted instructional leaders to intentionally look at developing a productive and satisfying working environment for teachers, and desirable learning conditions and outcomes for children. Blasé (2004) suggested seven behaviors of principals who provide instructional leadership: making suggestions, giving feedback, modeling effective instruction, soliciting opinions, supporting collaboration, providing professional development opportunities, and giving praise for effective teaching (as cited in Rorrer, et al., 2008). After extensive review of the research on instructional leadership, Rorrer, et al. (2008) found the two main elements of instructional leadership to be "generating will" to reform and the "capacity to do so." These two components of providing instructional leadership in school reform helped

school districts bridge organizational development and policy implementation. Rorrer, et al. found when coordinating and aligning the work of others through communication, planning, and collaboration, district instructional leaders could build capacity and generate will. These districts, like CSD, looked for ways to give teachers professional development that would offer challenging and desirable learning environments for the students (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

Reorienting the organization.

The second essential role of districts in educational reform on effective schooling was 'Reorienting the Organization.' Reorienting the organization was defined as districts' shifts in structures and processes to support systemic reform while ensuring these structures and processes were aligned with the district's beliefs, expectations, and norms. Rorrer, et al. (2008) found successful districts as those with goals to support and improve teaching and learning, refined organizational structures and processes, and altered district culture to align with their goals.

Peterson, Murphy, and Hallinger (1987) demonstrated how twelve school districts in California used locally developed mechanisms to control, coordinate, and assess the technical core activities (instruction, curriculum, goal setting, principal selection, evaluation, and funding of the districts). Petersen (1999) reported similar research from California superintendents who were instructionally focused. These superintendents' districts with greater than average performance on state achievement tests articulated a vision, integrated that vision into the district's mission, and took a proactive stance in creating an organizational structure that supported their vision and role as instructional leader. Rorrer, et al. (2008) reported district leaders needed to exert more control over and involvement in decision-making and reform

implementation, increasing attention and resources to the curriculum and instruction, hiring or replacing staff to support the mission, and monitoring the technical core of the district's improvement. These districts were similar to the make-up of CSD.

Establishing policy coherence.

The third essential role of districts in educational reform on effective schooling was 'Establishing Policy Coherence.' Establishing policy coherence involves mediating federal, state, and local policy and aligning resources to form a unified commitment. Firestone (1989) found school districts must link policy to needs and desired outcomes. This can be done by an alignment of external demands with internally generated demands (Rorrer, 2002; Rorrer, et al., 2008). "Aligning resources is indicative of the will (commitment) of the district to their reforms, contributes to the development of capacity to enact reform, and improves the likelihood of reform success and sustainability" (Rorrer, et al., 2008, p. 327). Spillane (1997) reported, "School districts' policy-making initiatives matter in that they influence reform to school practioners" (p. 325). Kirp and Driver (1995) found a policy maker's role is policy adaption by explaining, defining, and redefining practice locally yet not insisting on adherence to control all micro parts. CSD made financial decisions about resources from the federal and state level (Title 1 dollars and the Transportation fund) that benefited all the students in the district.

Maintaining an equity focus.

The fourth essential role of districts in educational reform on effective schooling was 'Maintaining an Equity Focus.' Rorrer, et al. (2008) found most reform had been centered on improved instruction and outcomes, and only recently had maintaining an equity focus become prominent as an explicit value in school reform for effective schooling. Maintaining an equity

focus involved owning past inequity and foregrounding equity. Rorrer (2001) found a school district in Texas had shown significant progress in raising performance for all students by disrupted inequities. This district's leadership used a window of opportunity and a commitment to equity coupled with excellence to implement a calculated process to achieve equitable opportunities and outcomes for their students. Rorrer (2006; 2001) found districts that maintained an equity focus understood that a move toward equity is political, potentially contentious, and often riddled with conflict. In spite of this knowledge, to institutionalize equity, districts must consciously and deliberately attract attention to the degree of inequity that exists and respond to the attention of others. Districts, like CSD, in their move toward effective schooling had to own their achievement data and make decisions that were transparent to allocate resources that supported increased equitable access and outcomes in the district's goals in the Redesign Plan.

Many school districts, like CSD, needed structural and organizational changes to align district operations with goals for improvement. The institutional leaders in CSD understood the need to look for better ways to improve learning for all students. As mentioned in the General Educational Provisions Act statement, "CSD seeks to eliminate all barriers to an excellent and equitable education for all students" (MSAP, 2010, p. EO).

Research question two: "How did stakeholders' input compare to the district leaders' case for reform?" was examined using the framework on White Fragility (DiAngelo, 2011). Stakeholder input revealed resisters to the proposed Redesign Plan. These resisters employed arguments aligned with DiAngelo's description of White Fragility, arguing they were being victimized, that their children's schools would deteriorate in quality, and that they should be entitled to remain in the single elite magnet program.

The CSD leaders expected political backlash for some of the community stakeholders yet held firm to their commitment to reorienting the organization to embrace equity for all students. Pushback in CSD came in force from Elm Magnet School parents who were the White families already enrolled in the first magnet school in the district and who were denied grandfathering to stay at their school.

The backlash and pushback that CSD expected and received was explained by DiAngelo (2011). DiAngelo found White people in North America live in a social environment that protects and insulates them from race-based stress. Fine (1999) explained the insulation as how Whiteness accrues privilege and status. The insulated environment of racial privilege builds white expectations for racial comfort while at the same time lowering the ability to tolerate racial stress. DiAngelo reported, "Although White racial insulation is somewhat mediated by social class (with poor and working class urban Whites being generally less racially insulated than suburban or rural Whites), the larger social environment insulates and protects whites as a group through institutions and cultural representations (p. 55)."

Definition of Terms

For clarity and consistency throughout this dissertation, relevant terms and definitions are provided below.

- The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) passed Congress with overwhelming bipartisan support in 2001 and was signed into law by President George W. Bush on Jan. 8, 2002, as the update to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The NCLB 2001-2007 act grew out of concern that the American education system was no longer internationally competitive. The NCLB act significantly increased the federal government's role in holding schools accountable for the academic progress of all students. NCLB placed a special focus on ensuring that states and schools increased the

performance of certain groups of students, such as English-language learners, students in special education, and poor and minority children, whose achievement, on average, was below their peers. States did not have to comply with the new requirements, but if they did not, they risked losing federal Title I money (Department of Education, 2002). Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), 2015 requires that schools annually report achievement scores of students using data by race, economic status, disability, and English-Learner status including safeguards on the progress of underserved students.

- A suburban school exists in the outer suburbs of a city. It is usually characterized by its population of middle-class, white majority students whose parents have moved from the inner city areas in generations past to find open spaces or to get away from crime ridden areas associated with the inner city (Holt, 2000).
- Frankenberg and Orfield (2012) reported Suburbia had long been part of our nation's geography and it lacks clear definition now. The decennial Census does not identify geographies as suburban, instead identifying principal cities in metropolitan areas. The Census definition "not the central city" is more useful than "suburb" (p. 11). Frankenberg and Orfield (2012) reported concerns once confined to urban districts were increasingly found now in suburban districts including: increased diversity in terms of racial/ethnic and socioeconomics; inner-ring suburbs and satellite cities that are replicating patterns of racial and economic segregation; teaching staff inadequately trained to teach a diverse student population; limited financial, human, and organizational resources; political institutions unprepared to accommodate increasing diversity; and deteriorating and overcrowded infrastructure.

- Urban as explained by Noguera (2003) is less likely to be used as a geographic concept to define and describe physical location than as a social or cultural construct used to describe certain people and places. Demographers define any neighborhood or residence within a standard metropolitan area as urban. The term urban has taken on specific socioeconomic and racial characteristics, usually describing people living in urban areas as relatively poor and, in many cases, non-White (families of color). On some occasions urban and inner-city are used interchangeably yet the more acceptable term, urban, is used to reference people who reside within certain neighborhood cities. Many concerns once confined to urban schools are increasingly found in suburban districts, including: 1. increased diversity among the school-age population in terms of racial/ethnic and socioeconomic composition; 2. inner-ring suburbs and satellite cities that are replicating patterns of racial and economic segregation found in some of our nation's central cities; 3. a teaching staff that may be inadequately trained to teach a diverse student population; 4. limited financial, human, and organizational resources to address these new challenges; 5. political institutions unprepared to accommodate increasing diversity; and 6. deteriorating or overcrowded infrastructure. While the magnitude of these concerns may not be as great in some suburbs as in many central cities, if left unaddressed, they are likely to create situations of separate and unequal schools (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2012).
- The Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) provides grants to eligible local educational agencies to establish and operate magnet schools that are operated under a court-ordered or federally approved voluntary desegregation plan. These grants assist in the desegregation of public schools by supporting the elimination, reduction, and prevention of minority group isolation in elementary and secondary schools with

substantial numbers of minority group students. In order to meet the statutory purposes of the program, projects also must support the development and implementation of magnet schools that assist in the achievement of systemic reforms and provide all students with the opportunity to meet challenging academic content and academic achievement standards. Projects support the development and design of innovative education methods and practices that promote diversity and increase choices in public education programs. The program supports capacity development–the ability of a school to help all its students meet more challenging standards–through professional development and other activities that will enable the continued operation of the magnet schools at a high performance level after funding ends. The program supports the implementation of courses of instruction in magnet schools that strengthen students' knowledge of academic subjects and their understanding of marketable vocational skills (Magnet Schools Assistant Program, Department of Education, 2014).

- Choice programs include magnet schools, vouchers, and charter schools (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2011). Magnet schools make up the largest system of choice in the United States. They were originally conceived to accomplish the goals of innovation and integration. Magnet schools became popular during the mid-1970s as a way to infuse school desegregation strategies with more parental choice (The Civil Rights Project, 2006). An education voucher is a mechanism for the public funding of education to move with a student. Tax dollars follow the student and help pay the costs of education at whatever school the student attends (Carl, 2011). Charter schools are a new type of public school started by teachers, parents, or private organizations with the approval of the state designed authority (Godwin & Kemerer, 2002).

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter includes a review of the literature around the historical background and components of school choice and school reform that were relevant to this study. This literature provided the foundation for understanding school choice programs past and present, as well as school reform programs in school districts. Research concerning choice policies, charter schools, magnet schools, educational reform, the Magnet Schools Assistant Program grants, and especially the work of Rorrer, Skrla, and Scheurich (2008) and DiAngelo (2011) were all important to this research.

Choice Policies

The researcher wanted the readers of this study to have some knowledge of choice policies (magnet schools, vouchers, and charter schools) from the early years, bringing to the foreground that the 1944 Education Act underlined a general principle that children were to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents. During that time in the United States most White families enrolled their children in the public schools in their neighborhood (Gorard, Taylor, & Fitz, 2003). Wirt, F. M. and Kirst, M. W. (2001).

Wirt, F. M. and Kirst, M. W. (2001) also found during the 1960s public dissatisfaction over declining student achievement. As early as the 1950s federal laws pursued improvements in teaching, especially science, as one of many precursors to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to improve the education of poor children. In the 1980s, most states mandated improved services for all schools, yet these laws did not fully address the public dissatisfaction over student achievement, curriculum quality, and teaching. These findings lead to debates providing choice for parents by moving children within or between districts.

Wirt, F. M. and Kirst, M. W. (2001) researched cities in Dade County, Florida; Los Angeles, California; and Chicago, Illinois that implemented reform programs that decentralized schools; however, even by 2009 there was no major impact on student achievement. Yet, The Commission on Choice in K-12 Education (2003) looked at schools in Chicago, Cleveland, Seattle, Milwaukee and also in the states of Michigan and Arizona and found choice options needed to be as much about 'how and how much' students are achieving as they were about supporting school choice. The commission found that communities should design and manage choice to achieve particular outcomes and avoid others by: promoting learning for children whose families choose, protecting learning for children of parents who are slow to choose, avoiding segregation, and avoiding harm to social cohesion (The National Working Commission on Choice in K-12 Education, 2003).

In 2000, President Bush created a Department of Education subunit to review vouchers and charter schools. Bush had wanted, even during his days as governor, more relief from burdensome laws, rules, and regulations allowing good teachers the freedom to teach and allowing schools to feel free to do whatever necessary to help students learn (Fusarelli, 2003). Much to the chagrin of many public school teachers and organizations, school reform included vouchers and charters schools. These new reforms, guaranteed by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, required schools test students' proficiency on reading and math. When test scores were declining, districts and community members had to look outside the traditional public school organizations for ways to improve student achievement (Sadker & Sadker, 2003).

Phillips, Hausman, and Larsen (2012) found that school choice policies such as voucher programs, magnet schools, charter schools, and intra- and inter-district transfer programs were increasing across the country. Fowler (2002) reported the current debates surrounding choice

programs made school choice the most controversial education policy of our time. Hill (2010) argued that school choice was the hottest contested issue in public education and the argument for or against school choice was complex and conditional, not simple. If there were successful programs, these successes are uneven and the results were subtle.

Warren and Tyagi (2005) found marketing pushed by these reforms could increase student achievement and improve all schools as marketing drives competition and choice schooling programs compete for the same students. These choices brought attention to education as a "market" with the theory that choice schools could compete with public schools.

Lubienski (2001), Henig (1994), and Margonis and Parker (1995) found the educational marketing could be driven by the desire of those individuals to exchange goods, services, and/or other manifestations of value (represented by the degree to which they are valued by *other people* in competitive bidding, and relative to other options) in a manner that will maximize their own individual self-interest. Lubienski (2001) found school choice proponents argued that the public is the primary beneficiary of choice, in terms of freedom to choose, and enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of the school system. The nature of the choice arrangements explicitly or implicitly encouraged parents to view themselves as consumers in pursuing the most appropriate education for their children.

Smrekar (1996) found marketing school choice caused changes in our nation's schools that involved instruction, assessment, and governance. Her research across the United States found repeated calls for parent empowerment as a key weapon in the struggle to slow the downward slide in academic indicators. Smrekar's findings indicated parent involvement enhances parents' attitudes about their roles in the schools and the schools their children attend. The findings also indicated school achievement increased when there was effective parent

involvement.

Schneider, Teske, and Marschall (2000) researched the choice programs from the lens of the decisions parents faced with regard to choice programs. They viewed parents as consumers of education, and studied parents who choose private schools as well as parents whose children were in public schools. In districts with public school choice, like CDS, parents who saw schools as markets may be less likely to leave for a private school.

Hill (2010) also found that the theories behind school choice identify inexorable forces and fundamental relationships while they assume idealized conditions that are never perfectly met in the real world. There are differences in how parents of socioeconomic status navigate choice options. High-income and more educated parents participate in their child's school at higher rates than lower-class parents (Baker & Stevenson, 1986;Lareau, 1987). Some parents were too busy with other things to spend time on understanding the choice procedures. Other parents do not understand the choices available to them, or know their children's talents and interest well enough to know which school is best. Hill's (2010) research gave caution to consider these real-world factors that can complicate, delay, and interfere with the cause-and-effect relationships in choosing schools.

Wirt, F. M. and Kirst, M. W. (2001) expanded on the work of Hill (2010) agreeing that choice for parents was not simple but complex and conditional. Choice was one of four values that were pursued by parents in school policy, with the other three being quality, efficiency, and equity. Choice schooling was difficult to navigate for some parents yet expected and wanted for others, noting the value of choice can inherently oppose the other three values of quality, efficiency, and equity because nothing in the other values compels one to select them.

Warren and Tyagi (2005) found choice itself imposed burdens on parents who do not always manage decisions in the manner predicted by economists and education policy advocates, who envision fully rational actors who have the resources and knowledge to make the best decisions possible for their children. Schwartz (2005) analyzed the burdens of consumer choice, concluding more choice does not mean better decisions and more satisfaction. He found choices multiplied might not liberate consumers but debilitate them.

Bell (2005) found socioeconomic status had a significant impact on how parents negotiate school choice. She explained that parents do rely on their social networks no matter what their backgrounds, yet different income levels have different social networks. Social networks produce different information for the different groups. Bell found that poor and working-class parents chose failing schools at a higher rate than the middle-income parents because they were not skilled at understanding how to evaluate schools using student achievement data.

DeJarnatt (2006) reported many people believe that choice gave the poor the options currently enjoyed by the wealthy and thus it is inherently fair and desirable. Yet, James (2014) found assuming a 'rational parent', as an actor in the educational market place is able to choose the best educational option for their child is a myth.

DeJarnatt (2006) found that middle-class parents, particularly upper middle class parents, have greater cultural capital to navigate the system of choice schooling compared to those families in the lower to middle class. In this study, many parents (who were not familiar with how schooling works) really had no voice and had to send their children to the school in their geographically assigned area. Parents with economic capital had opportunities to choose private schools over their public school assignment for years. The economic make-up of these

families, economic capital, and the belief that these schools were academically more challenging than public schools presented parents with a valuable choice option.

Warren and Tyagi (2005) reported that children are the source of the financial pressures on many American families because parents feel compelled to devote more of their resources to finding housing in neighborhoods with good schools. These same families pay for pre-school for their younger children because both parents work. Middle-class parents viewed having their children enrolled in schools with tested and proven academic curriculum as an essential first step in their education process. Their K-12 pressures were also succeeded by the growing expense of college, which similarly is now widely viewed as essential to maintaining middle-class status.

Scott (2005) found, influenced by the market theory, choice advocates argued parents made rational choices about where to send their children based on the quality of a school's instruction and its program focus. From this perspective, parental decisions ensure that charter schools with interesting programs and high student performance survive.

Charter Schools

Charter Schools as a form of choice schooling are by definition new public schools started by teachers, parents, or private organizations with the approval of the state designated authority (Godwin & Kemerer, 2002). Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, was the official force behind the charter school movement in 1988. Sadker and Sadker (2003) summarized the belief of Shanker stating that these charter schools would improve learning for all students. These charter schools were contracted with the legal permission to operate for a limited amount of time from a local or state school board with the following stipulations: 1) A school could be created as a new school or a school could be converted as an existing public school; 2) A school could not prohibit admission using testing scores; 3) Schools had to be nonsectarian; 4) Schools must demonstrate improvement in student performance; 5)

Schools could be closed when expectations were not met; 6) Schools had limited state rules and regulations; and 7) Schools would receive funding based on enrollment. The United States Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement sponsored four national studies of charter schools (Scott, 2005). Charter schools have emerged as a popular form of school choice partly because the ideals of the charter movement appeal to people with a broad range of ideological perspectives. Conservatives see charters developed under strong state laws as steps toward a more comprehensive voucher system that included private schools. Liberals often see limited charters developed under weak state laws as a way to gain the flexibility of private schools without moving toward private vouchers (Schneider, Teske, & Marschall, (2000).

Fusarelli (2003) reported there was limited opposition to charter schools in the state of Texas as charter school proposals were seen as safe competition. These charter schools were framed with the same context of the public education system. Charter schools are public schools open to all students.

Schneider et al. (2000) found the above components of the charter movement evolved as a bottom-up reform with a wide range of schools, themes, and approaches. There has been a rapid increase in charter schools. In 1999 there were over 350,000 students attending over 1,700 charter schools in the more than half of the United States.

Wirt, F. M. and Kirst, M. W. (2001). found that groups (parents, school districts, stakeholders) used their political power to satisfy their own values and resources when looking at policy that involved school choice. Fuller et al. (1996) found differences in satisfaction among parents. Some parents indicated that they based their choice of school on academics, values, and discipline/safety while other parents made decisions based on convenience indicated lower levels of satisfaction with their chosen school. Fuller et al. cautioned districts to look carefully at school

reform programs that required all parents to choose finding full district choice might result in a larger percentage of parents choosing for reasons of convenience. This study also found that greater income was a predictor of parent involvement. Bridge and Blackman (1978) reported 70.9% of parents used location as a decision in the school their child would attend while only 32% responded the school's theme or academic programs influenced their choice.

Hausman and Goldring (1997) found the opposite and reported magnet school parents did base their choice on academics/school themes/discipline and reasons of convenience were a minimal factor. Yet both studies concluded that wealthier and more highly educated parents were more likely to have chosen schools prior to their child enrolling in school expecting strong student achievement, capable teachers, and safe environments.

Magnet Programs

The choice option, magnet programs, was very important to this study as, the Creekside School District converted all of their elementary programs into magnet schools with matching sister schools on both sides of the district.

Elam and Rose (1996) found that magnet programs were the most prevalent way to provide choice schooling. Magnet programs were advertised as high-quality educational programs. Magnet programs are still a widespread form of school choice that paved the way to vouchers and choice schooling experienced today (Hausman & Goldring, 1997). Starting as early as the 1960s, the federal government's goal of moving populations around to desegregate schools provided opportunity for creativity. This creativity provided the opportunity to design magnet schools, and to encourage families to enroll their children in schools that were not necessarily located in their neighborhoods. Many magnet programs had unique curricular themes such as music and the arts, environmental, STEM, global, and communication all well worth any distance from a family's home neighborhood (Sadker & Sadker, 2003). The first magnet schools

were started in the 1970s, and by 1983 one third of larger urban school districts had magnet schools.

Berends, Springer, Ballou, and Walberg (2009), reported a rise in magnet schools in response to court-ordered racial desegregation plans that required involuntary bussing of students away from racially isolated schools. These racially isolated schools were in districts that had enrollment extremes of mostly all White and all Black schools. Berends et al. reported half Black/half White school districts were ordered by the courts to transport students enrolled in schools with less than a quarter and more than three quarters of students of a single race. To coerce parents in choice schooling, magnet schools were "themed" to attract students from schools completely or largely of their own race to voluntarily select schools of another race.

Blank (1990) reported many magnet programs had the following four qualities: a thematic curriculum, admissions criteria to facilitate voluntary desegregation, choice of school by families, and access to pupils beyond neighborhood attendance zones. Dentler (1991) listed four components of magnet schools: distinctive curriculum, unique district purpose for voluntary desegregation, an opportunity for school choice, and access to students beyond an attendance zone.

Steel and Levine (1994) found thirty-five years ago, 230 school systems operated 2,400 magnet schools, and there were 3,200 individual magnet programs in the United States. These magnet schools and magnet programs served 1.2 million students with 68% of all urban students educated in districts having magnet schools. Between 1985 and 1993, federal funding from the Magnet Schools Assistance Program totaled $739,500,000 with 'funded school systems' receiving an average award of more than 3.6 million dollars to support magnet implementation. Currently, The Magnet Schools Assistance Program grant has funded school reform in districts

like CSD to reduce isolated racial pockets, to improve achievement for all schools, and to offer magnet programs for their families.

Poppelit and Hague (2001), Dentler (1991), Hausman and Goldring (1997) and Elam and Rose (1996) studied choice programs and found programs that were effective in increasing student achievement and others lacking in regards to student achievement. Adock and Phillip (2000) found elementary students in magnet programs performed better than non-magnet students because students were self-selected for the magnet/choice program. Adock and Phillip also found the success of magnet programs in the areas of academic achievement, parent involvement, and community involvement accounted for observable and measurable benefits for the students.

Educational Reform

The mandates of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965 and 2015, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001, and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015 are reminders that educational organizations must ensure all students meet academic achievement requirements. These mandates have caused school districts with low and declining student achievement to look at school reform plans that ensure increased improvement and achievement for all students enrolled in their schools.

Wirt, F. M. and Kirst, M. W. (2001) found that school boards are crucial agents needed for school improvement, and reforms should be directed at strengthening the local school board's capacity to bring about and monitor change. Both the pressure from newer local constituents and the policy pressures from above strongly influence school administrators. Parents' values and students' achievement needs strongly influence school leaders. City and state leaders want better schools to educate our citizens for stronger economic growth. There are increasing higher

academic demands, greater accountability for educators, and more choice options that are driving school leaders to look at reform initiatives that support accomplishing these demands.

Rorrer, Skrla, and Scheurich (2008) used a conceptual framework identifying four roles of district reform. These four essential roles are important in identifying how school districts could implement systemic reform to improve achievement and to advance equity. . The four roles include: 1) providing instructional leadership 2) reorienting the organization 3) establishing policy, and 4) maintaining an equity focus. These roles are interdependent, variably coupled, and coevolving through a non-linear process.

Smith and O'Day (1990) and Doyle and Finn (1984) opposed Rorrer, et al.'s research and found reform efforts should be made at the school level. Reporting that principals and teachers are not only the agents of change but also the designers, directors, and initiators of the change efforts for school reform. Yet, Rorrer, et al. (2008) reported district leaders are vital institutional actors in systemic educational reform and are bound by a web of interrelated and interdependent roles, responsibilities, and relationships that facilitate systemic reform.

The first element of systemic reform in improving achievement and advancing equity was proving instructional leadership. Berman (1986), Jacobson (1986), McLaughlin (1987), Firestone (1989), Daresh (1991), Elmore and Burney (1997), Spillane and Thompson (1997), Selafani (2001), Massell (2000), Fuller and Johnson (2004) Honig (2003), and Rorrer, et al. (2008) found instructional leadership at the district level involved two elements that were consistent in research and cited often as "generating will" and "building capacity." In discussing "generating will," McLaughlin (1987) found that "will and support" could be manifested as the attitudes, motivation, and beliefs that support the reformer's response to a policy's goals or strategies. "Will" necessary to initiate or sustain reform to improve performance district wide does not arise

automatically or simply in response to external environments. Firestone (1989) reported instructional leadership involved intentionally coupling "will and capacity building" as capacity building reflected the district's ability to commit to a decision. Firestone defined capacity to actually implementing 'the decision' (as cited in Rorrer, et al., 2008).

Reorienting the organization was the second role of school districts in systemic reform. Elmore and Burney (1997), Pajak and Glickman (1989), McLaughlin (1992), Cawelti (2001), Corcoran, Fuhrman, and Belcher (2001), Porter, et al. (2002), McLaughlin and Talbert (2003) and Rorrer, et al. (2008) found that reorienting the organization involved refining and aligning organizational structures and processes in addition to changing the district culture. Peterson, et al.'s (1987) research on districts' evidence-based reform that lacked coordination, alignment, and coherence with district goals were less effective and had trouble scaling-up their reform efforts. While reorienting the organization involved refining and aligning organizational structures and processes, attention should be given to changing the district culture. McLaughlin (1992) found that a means for supporting reform required the district to change its culture summarizing that a district should change norms, expectations, and values. McLaughlin found when a district's support for reform was changing norms, expectations, and values there would be changes in its culture.

Establishing policy was the third element of a school district's reform. Aligning resources and mediating federal, state, and local policy are two components to establishing policy (Purkey & Smith, 1985; Desimone, et al., 2002; Firestone, 1989; Elmore, 1993; Kirp & Driver, 1995; Price, Ball, & Luke, 1995; Spillane, 1996; Kappa, 1997; Spillane & Thompson, 1997; Wenglinsky, 1997; Massell, 2000; Mayo & McIntye, 2003; Honig & Hatch, 2004; Rorrer

& Skrla, 2005; and Rorrer, 2006). Firestone (1989) explained how Hall's (1987) research adapted state policy for their purposes:

> In some districts, leaders will share a belief that they can shape what happens in and to their districts. They will have a long-range vision of where they want their district to go. Their own actions and decisions will be monitored to ensure that they contribute to this long-range vision. Moreover, state policies will be interpreted in light of this vision. Policies that fit it will be embraced: others will be opposed or an effort will be made-both locally and in the state capitol-to get modification to fit the local vision (1987b, p. 156).

Rorrer, et al. (2008) maintained an equity focus was the fourth element of systemic reform that encompasses owning past inequities in both the system and culture of the district. A focus on equity includes foregrounding equity and including increasing availability and transparency of district data. Aligning resources is indicative to the will/commitment of the district to their reforms, contributes to the development of capacity to enact reform, and improves the likelihood of reform success and sustainability. Districts evolve with the realization there needs to be a disruption of the inequities happening in their organizations.

Madda, Halverson, and Gomez (2007) reported that school districts should focus reform on improving learning for all children with the understanding that new programs should fit coherently into existing initiatives. Madda, et al. also reported that school districts could have initiatives that conflict with each other or with some existing practices in schools. Yet, Rorrer, et al., re-enforced from their research the value of reorienting the organization and establishing policy coherence to change and sustain school systems when instructional leaders of the district act in once voice. Giesting (2011) also reported; "Change efforts must be supported by agreed upon values that will sustain a changed organizational structure" (p. 32).

Zumda, Kuklis, and Kline (2004) found theory and research illuminated practice, and practice informed research summarizing that all change efforts must be personalized to fit the local context of the district. Darling-Hammond (1997) stated:

> Studies of change efforts have found that the fate of a new program and ideas rests on teachers' and administrators' opportunities to learn, experiment, and adapt ideas to their local context. Without these opportunities, innovation fades away when the money stops or the enforcement pressures end (p. 214).

Scholarly literature about school reform pointed to the value of the educational leaders at the district level and school level supporting the reform before and during the implementation to make the change part of the culture to reinforce sustainability. This researcher found the framework of Rorrer, et al. was an effective framework for examining the CSD's case for school reform in answering the first research question: "How did district leaders make a case for school reform?" Given CSD's three goals from their school reform plan were all connected to choice and equity, to answer the second research question: "How did stakeholders' input compare to the district leaders' case for reform?" the researcher used DiAngelo's White Fragility's framework.

White fragility.

The researcher found that district leaders approached the district reform in line with Rorrer, Skrla, & Scheurich's (2008), characteristics of institutional actors in educational reform, centering issues of equity and increasing segregation. Yet, stakeholder input from families enrolled in the first magnet school, Elm Magnet revealed that issues of equity and increased segregation were in fact problematic, as resisters to the proposed reform plan employed arguments aligned with DiAngelo's description of White Fragility (DiAngelo, 2011). Most of the families attending Elm Magnet were White families from middle to upper income levels.

DiAngelo (2011) found Whites live primarily segregated lives in a white-dominated society. They receive little or no authentic information about racism and are thus unprepared to think about it critically or with complexity, leading to pushbacks when their lives are threatened. Therefore, the researcher used DiAngelo's framework to examine the families' resistance that was revealed from their comment cards. DiAngelo used three characteristics to help explain

White Fragility; lessening quality, whiteness as reality and entitlement, and victimization to examine research question two.

Whiteness, as referenced by DiAngelo, is a set of locations that are historically, culturally, politically, socially, and intrinsically linked to relationships of domination. Whiteness and property of race according to DiAngelo are interconnected and co-produced. Hess (1998) and DiAngelo's research illuminated White Fragility as habitus, a formation into which dominant culture invites White people to participate. 'White Fragility' powerfully reinforces white supremacy, all the while erasing routes to awareness of itself. 'White Fragility' erects barriers within White people that push off opportunities for engagement with other communities and offers an excuse for avoiding proximity. Hess also found without accountable, daily relationship it is possible to become enclosed in spaces that insulate White people from racial awareness. This framework was especially important because many of the families attending Elm Magnet started with the program and had only interacted with each other both educationally and socially.

Lessening quality.

Lessening quality is revealed when people feel their quality of life is being lessened or reduced by a situation and whiteness shows itself when White people make comments that include sentiments regarding a threat to quality or competiveness (DiAngelo, 2011). DiAngelo gave an example to explain this lessening quality. During a professional development training about racism, a White female participant, we will can Ann, left the training upset by a comment she received from the facilitator. The facilitator told Ann some of the comments she made came across as being hurtful and careless to people of color in the training. During the break other White participants approached the facilitator saying their White co-worker, Ann was so

physically and emotionally upset by what the facilitator said to her that she was literally having a heart attack. All the attention shifted from the training session to Ann who was truly in physical pain because comments she had made were lessened by the facilitator and not appreciated. This example of 'lessening of quality' was also described by Vodde (2001) stating, "If privilege is defined as a legitimization of one's entitlement to resources, it can also be defined as permission to escape or avoid any challenges to this entitlement (p. 3)." Ann could not see past her 'Whiteness as Entitlement' to hear and process that what she might be saying to and about non-White people could be hurtful or careless to them (lessening of quality). DiAngelo reported when White people live in a white-dominated society they are unprepared or unwilling to think critically about inequities.

According to Franken, Lee, and Orfield, (2003), White people live segregated lives in physical proximity to people of color yet segregation occurs on multiple levels, including representational and informational. When White people live in a white-dominated society, they receive little or no authentic information about racism and are unprepared to think critically about inequities. Therefore, White parents can only reflect on their own needs (DiAngelo, 2011).

According to DiAngelo (2011) White Fragility is a state where even the minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable for White families. Racial stress for White people, results from an interruption to what is racially familiar to them. DiAngelo found Whites have not had the need to build the cognitive or affective skills that would allow for constructive engagement across racial divides. Given to the understanding when racial discomfort arises, Whites typically respond as if something is wrong and blames the person or event that triggered the discomfort.

Whiteness as reality and entitlement.

The second theme referenced by DiAngelo (2011), is 'Whiteness as reality and entitlement' explaining that White people enjoy their racial comfort and they are not happy when stretched out of their comfort zone. DiAngelo found White people live in a social environment that protects and insulates them from race-based stress. Fine (1997) explained that this insulation is how whiteness accrues privilege and status.

White Fragility is a symptom of structural racism that confers systemic privilege upon White people and everyday discourse. That thinking revealed for example "good" neighborhoods and "good" schools and what the people look like in those neighborhoods and schools reflected them (DiAngelo, 2011;Johnson & Shapiro, 2003).

Discourse of victimization.

The third theme referenced by DiAngelo (2011) was called 'Discourse of victimization.' This is where stakeholders feel betrayed at any calls for changes as an act of inequity toward them.

Bourdieu (1993) found people have sets of dispositions responsible for their perceptions and practices. A groups' habitus, their socialized subjectivity, reflects how the actors in these groups interact with each other and the rest of their environment. White Fragility can be conceptualized as a product of how people respond in their continued social and material advantages in their white position and white superiority remains unnamed and explicitly denied because groups' habitus might not be recognized by them. Whites see their success as the result of their ability and hard work. Believing their financial and professional accomplishments were the result of their own efforts while ignoring the fact of white privilege.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

Chapter three describes the research design, participants in the study, the site of the study, data collection, data analysis, and methods of trustworthiness. This qualitative study provided an approach for examining the research questions of how the CSD leaders made the case for their school reform, and how stakeholders' input compared to the district leaders' case for reform. The three goals targeted in the federal grant received by CSD were improving student achievement, decreasing minority isolation in the elementary schools, and providing more choice for families. The three goals addressed in the grant supported the mission of the district to empower all students to contribute and succeed in a competitive global community.

Methodology

The literature review for this study contributed to a qualitative inquiry that examined studies on school reform and school choice. The researcher used the frameworks of Rorrer, et al. (2008) and DiAngelo (2011) to answer the two research questions.

Research shows that schools should be an equalizer by contributing to a literate population and providing citizens with skills toward positive citizenship (Tyack, 1980; Noguera, 2003; Wirt & Kirst 2009). Gutmann (1999) described the goal of a democratic public education as conscious social reproduction in its most inclusive form. A democratic education offers a principled defense of schooling that aims to teach the skills and virtues of democratic deliberation within a social context where educational authority is shared among parents, citizens, and professional educators. A democratic state is committed to allocating educational authority in such a way as to provide its members with an education adequate to participate in democratic politics, to choosing among (a limited range) of good lives, and to share in the several sub-communities, such as families, that impart identity in the lives of its citizens.

Understanding a need to improve learning for all their students, the CSD district implemented a school reform plan with stakeholder input to address their three goals.

Research Questions

Using the historical data gathered from the CSD's project director for the Redesign Plan, and the MSAP federal grant the researcher answered the following research questions:

- How did district leaders make a case for school reform?
- How did stakeholders' input compare to the district leaders' case for reform?

The researcher used Rorrer, Skrla, and Scheurich's (2008) framework to answer research question one. In an interview with Scheurich (personal communication, March 27, 2017), to attain clarification regarding reform plans in school districts from his research on institutional actors using one voice, he reported that school reform was about changing the attitudes of the educators. Also reporting institutional leaders acting in one voice using four essential roles in an organized framework can have an influence on student achievement for all students, but especially students of color, if educators change their attitudes.

Scheurich (2017) stated some school reform plans have shown immediate bumps in achievement because the reform brought new district initiatives; however, Scheurich also found other school reform initiatives showed drops in achievement at the beginning of the implementation because the reform initiatives caused unsettlement in the schools' educators. Yet, Scheurich found in other districts, after two or three years, there can be an upswing in achievement because educators have embraced the school reform initiatives. The researcher found that district leaders approached the district reform in line with Rorrer, Skrla, & Scheurich's (2008), characteristics of institutional actors in educational reform, centering issues of equity and increasing segregation.

Research Design

The researcher applied two conceptual frameworks and qualitative inquiry to examine the school reform of a Midwestern school district in answering the two research questions. The researcher found Rorrer, et al.'s (2008) descriptive account of school reform was an effective way to examine the rationale for the CSD's school reform plan. The researcher also found DiAngelo's (2011) framework was effective when examining the pushback from stakeholders who were resisters to the school reform plan.

The researcher examined the qualitative data obtained from stakeholders, the pre-planning of the reform, and narratives listed in the MSAP grant that was awarded to CSD to support funding for the Redesign Program. The researcher applied the conceptual framework (Institutional Actors in Educational Reform) to generate answers to the first research question, "How did district leaders make a case for school reform?" Rorrer, et al. (2008) offered the notion that district leaders acted as a single organized institutional actor. The researcher for this study found that Rorrer et al.'s framework was in line with CSD's school reform plan, and was useful in examining their reform plan.

The researcher applied the conceptual framework (White Fragility) to generate answers to the second research question, "How did stakeholders' input compare to the district leaders' case for reform?" DiAngelo offered in her conceptual framework that white privilege might have caused resistance from the CSD stakeholders when implementing school reform addressing equity and school choice.

The research was qualitative and data were collected from district surveys completed by IUPUI and comment cards collected from stakeholders between 2007 and2010. The researcher used the four essential roles from Rorrer, et al.'s research: reorienting the organization, providing instructional leadership, establishing policy coherence, and maintaining an equity focus as one

conceptual framework (Actors in Educational Reform) and DiAngelo's components of lessening of quality, whiteness as reality and entitlement, and discourse of victimization as another conceptual framework (White Fragility). These frameworks were used to examine the rationale for the school reform and the stakeholders' input to the reform plan.

Participants and Site

The participants in the study were the stakeholders (parents, teachers, and community members), and the educational leaders in Creekside's district office who designed the school reform plan. All stakeholder comments were received from the preplanning and implementation stages and made available to the researcher. Only historical documents received from the CSD's project coordinator were used in the data analysis.

The setting for this research was the CSD district of 15,000 students on the northern outskirts of a Midwestern city. CSD was a once suburban now more urban district rapidly growing from the 1980s through 2005. The majority of the population increase occurred in the northern part of the district. The population moving into the district during the mid-1980s were middle to high socioeconomic families who were predominantly White resulting in over-crowded elementary schools in the northwestern quadrant of the district. Two magnet schools were created in the center and south central areas of the district which proved to be successful in attracting White families from the northwestern side of the district to areas under populated in the south central region of the district.

Growth later started in the southern part of the district as the northern population aged and settled in growth. This new growth in the southern part of the district, closer to the inner city, attracted predominantly Black and Hispanic populations creating a dichotomous district (ethnically, racially, linguistically, and socioeconomically).

CSD was the seventh largest district in this Midwestern state peaking in growth during the 2004-2005 school year with over 16,000 students. Since the 2004-2005 school year, enrollments had declined each year with the largest decline (400 students) in 2009-2010. The demographics of CSD have continued to become more diverse with increases in students of color (Black and Hispanic). During these demographic shifts, the state assessment test indicated CSD had shown limited success in effectively educating students of color and English Language Learners. The No Child Left Behind regulations identified CSD as an underperforming district (as defined by Title I) causing district leaders to have a renewed sense of urgency to improve student achievement for all students (MSAP, 2010).

Approximately 6500 students, in grades one through six (every family with elementary children) were impacted by the Redesign Program. All families in the CSD were impacted by the transportation changes making it possible for students to travel from any school on their side of the CSD.

Data Collection

Historical document review.

The Creekside District requested input, years prior to the Redesign Plan, and the year just before the implementation of the school reform plan from parents and community members from all economic levels and from racial groups that reflected the district's enrollment. Data were collected by the CSD district leaders and given to the researcher by the CSD's magnet project director. Data sources include the following:

- IUPUI Survey Research Center open-ended questions, respondent demographics (2007);
- IUPUI Survey Research Center parent survey comments and demographics (2008);

- Phase I - Leadership and Learning Center (October 2006-April 2007);
- Phase II - EXCEL: Excellence Through Committee Education & Learning (May 2007-December 2007);
- Phase III - Redesigning Elementary Schools: The Power of Choice (January 2008-October 2008);
- Comment cards (over 700) collected from community forms, parent meetings, and emails

Pre-planning survey.

Stakeholder input was requested during the pre-planning of the school reform movement. Pre-planning surveys for Creekside were conducted by IUPUI in 2008 and were followed up in three phases. Phases I, II, and III planning were conducted by the Creekside School District and the Lead and Learn–Leadership and Learning Center. Phase 1 – (conducted October 2006- April 2007 by the CSD's 'Balanced Enrollment Committee') focused on the East/West district layout, expansion of choice options, and balancing enrollment. Phase II (conducted May 2007-December 2007 by CSD's Excellence Through Community Education and Learning (EXCEL) committee) focused on collection of phone surveys and online/paper surveys concerning choice, balanced schools, equal access, communication, academic rigor, behavioral expectations, cultural competency. Phase III - was a follow-up for 'What to do?' from January 2008-October 2008 concerning defining choice, balancing enrollments, and elementary program emphasis.

Pre-Reform Stakeholder Input

The Survey Research Center (SRC) at IUPUI, a unit of the Indiana University School of Liberal Arts, is an interdisciplinary survey research center that provided services to a wide

variety of private, non-profit, and governmental organizations. SRC was hired by CSD to conduct research in 2006, and again in 2007 with stakeholders living in the CSD.

The SRC conducted a survey of adults that resided in the community served by the schools. Interviews were conducted between February 15, 2006 and March 15, 2006 and presented to the CSD on April 12, 2006. The stakeholders were asked to rate the importance of various school characteristics toward the provision of a quality education *in general* not necessarily in CSD. Questions concerning school characteristics (school security, test scores, coursework, special programs for special needs students, class size, compensation package for staff, and facilities) were read to each respondent in random order so as to mitigate any effects of order. The results were analyzed between households comparing respondents with school-aged children and those without school aged children.

The second survey conducted by the IUPUI SRC was completed in 2007 with the purpose to survey parents' current knowledge of and attitudes toward the school district's administration. The second survey used by the SRC interviewed parents living in the CSD that had a child attending a school in the district. The survey began on November 5, 2007 and ended on November 20, 2007, with reports to the district in January 2008.

Both IUPUI samples completed by the SRC were drawn from randomly selected families of students enrolled in the district. Interviews were organized to reflect the racial and ethnic distribution of CSD including 10% Hispanic, 40% Black, and 50% other race-ethnic categories. Data were collected by telephone interviews that lasted about 10-11 minutes. Respondents were informed at the outset of the phone call that their participation was voluntary. There were a total of over 1,000 completed surveys collected from each IUPUI study. The demographics of the

respondents were classified by gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, and marital status. Surveys were conducted in Spanish for families speaking only Spanish.

Toward the end of the interviews parents were asked two additional questions: What is the most important change that needs to occur in CSD so that all schools can be successful in a competitive global community? What else do you consider important as the CSD moves into the future and please be specific?

Data Analysis

Riessman (1993) found throughout the beginning of collecting historical data and organizing themes, representation is vital as "representational decisions cannot be avoided" (p. 8). As coder of themes, the researcher categorized the themes for inclusion in the study understanding that challenges were embedded in the analysis process and could not be avoided (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

According to Marshall and Rossman (1999):

> In qualitative studies, data collection and analysis typically go hand in hand to build a coherent interpretation of the data. The researcher is guided by initial concepts and developing understandings but shifts or minifies them as she collects and analyzes the data. Her overall strategy rests more toward the interpretive/subjectivist end of the continuum than the technical/objective end (p. 151).

This study brought order, structure, and understanding to the accumulated historical data in order to answer the research questions (Marshal & Rossman, 1999). Marshal and Rossman found "Raw data has no inherent meaning; the interpretive act brings meaning to the data and displays that meaning to the reader through the written report" (p. 153). The researcher coded, labeled, and classified the themes.

Merriam (1997) proposes that because the findings of a study are emergent, collection and analysis occurs simultaneously in the process. Therefore, the researcher examined, organized, and categorized the historical data for this study coding and labeling and identifying similarities and differences in the themes for classification.

Methods of Trustworthiness

To assure the quality of results during the analysis process the researcher used Guba and Lincoln's (1989) trustworthiness criteria by replacing traditional mandates to be objective with an emphasis on trustworthiness and authenticity by being fair, balanced, and conscientious in taking account of multiple perspectives, interests, and realities. The researcher used the four criteria of confirmability, dependability, credibility, and transferability.

Confirmability was the degree of neutrality from the respondents shaping **t**he findings not the researcher. Dependability was proof that the findings or results of a study could be repeated or were consistent with other studies. Credibility was documentation in the truth of the findings and the researcher's confidence in the results. Transferability was documenting that the results or findings could be applicable in other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). The researcher used the criteria from Lincoln and Guba to explore the historical data gathered from the CSD community forums, phone surveys, and emails.

Guba (1978) found researchers should move back and forth between the discovery mode and the verification mode. This wave like thinking involves moving in and out of periods when the investigator is open to fine-tuning conceptualization, sifting ideas, and verifying explanations. In this proposed study, the researcher will confirm observed patterns in the themes and explain how patterns were interpreted and categorized. The confirmability of the final results was documented in how the historical data were reconstructed.

The researcher demonstrated dependability by allowing a conscious awareness of her perspective and the appreciation of the perspective of the participants. The researcher demonstrated fairness by accepting all the comments generated by the participants from the collected themed cards and by reading and categorizing each card and monitoring the process.

If this research is to be useful to other educators and researchers, there must be credibility. The researcher for this study aimed for balance and fairness and not to distort the data for vested interest using a stance of neutrality concerning effective school reforms.

Glaser and Strauss (1967), when explaining transferability in grounded theory, described what it means for results to 'fit and work' saying; "By 'fit' we mean that the categories must be readily (not forcibly) applicable to and indicated by the data under study and by 'work' we mean that they must be meaningfully relevant to and be able to explain the behavior under study" (p. 3). Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed using transferability interchangeable with 'fittingness':

> The degree of transferability is a direct function of the similarity between two contexts, what we shall call 'fittingness'. Fittingness is defined as degree of congruence between sending and receiving contexts. If context A and context B are sufficiently congruent, then working hypotheses from the sending originating context may be applicable in the receiving context (p. 124).

In addressing trustworthiness, credibility is like internal validity, transferability is like external validity, dependability is like reliability, and confirmability is like objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Noting is should be clear that the categories are abstractions derived from the data, not the data themselves. Categories are conceptual elements that cover or span many individual examples (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The researcher used the constant comparative method from the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) to develop a grounded theory from the 700 comment cards from stakeholders' feedback gathered from the CSD. The researcher used grounded theory when looking at

categories and constantly compared the themes that surfaced from the comment cards from stakeholders with a comparison to the themes published by the Redesign Plan planning prior to the Redesign Program plan. When the researcher generated a theory from the data, the concepts were driven by the data.

In qualitative research the investigator who assumes an inductive stance and strives to derive meaning from the data, finds a theory that emerges from or is grounded in the data. The historical data the researcher used were already collected and ready to be examined and used in the same manner as data from interviews or observations. The data furnished descriptive information, advanced new categories, offered understanding, and tracked changes and developments (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

District Grant

CSD reported in their pre-planning for the MSAP grant that parents with students enrolled in the first two magnet programs were extremely vocal and opinionated. Parents in the CSD had demanded schooling opportunities for their children that moved beyond just attending their assigned neighborhood school. The families already enrolled in the two magnet programs were pleased with their selected school programs, yet parents on the waiting lists wanted an opportunity to be selected into these two magnet programs and loudly complained to the district leaders.

The federal grant CSD received from the MSAP was called “Better Choices Now.” The purpose of the grant stated:

> The MSAP-AP, authorized under Title V, Part C of the Elementary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended, 20 U.S.C. 7231-6231j, provides funding to local educational agencies interested in supporting the development and implementation of magnet schools to reduce, eliminate or prevent minority, group isolation, to assist in the achievement of systemic reforms, and to provide all students with the opportunity to meet challenging academic content and student academic achievement standards (Table A3). The project

had a window period of August 1, 2010 through July 31, 2013 and was submitted on April 30, 2010 (Magnet Schools Assistance Program Redesign Grant 2010, p. 47).

The General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) stated: The Creekpoint School District sought to eliminate all barriers to an excellent and equitable education. Strategies included:

- All magnet schools would serve all students.
- Student selection is computerized and would allow no bias in selection of students.
- CSD would analyze gender enrollments to ensure equitable representation of both genders in each area of focus. Targeted marketing might be gender-based to help ensure gender equity.
- Students with disabilities would receive supplemental or support services as needed to access educational opportunities.
- All communication would be sent in English and Spanish. Translators were available.
- Classroom environments would include materials that allowed flexibility, culturally relevant and inclusive curriculum, and were challenging to students' abilities.
- Instructional activities would support multiple learning styles to support success for all.
- Employment of staff would also follow the district non-discrimination policies. (Magnet Schools Assistance Program Redesign Grant, 2010 p. 33)

The abstract for the MSAP grant stated:

The Creekpoint School District located in the northeast corner of a Midwestern city was applying for funding under the Magnet Schools Assistance Program in order to achieve three major goals, which would support the mission of the district to empower all students, to contribute and succeed in a competitive global community. The first goal was to improve student achievement. The CSD Board of Education passed an equity policy with the elimination of the racial achievement gap as the primary objective. Project based learning, creating an instructional match for all students, and rigor and high expectations for all students provided the cornerstones for the instructional program. Instruction that was research-based and focused on 21st Century skills would increase engagement and achievement for all students in the CSD. The second goal was to decrease minority isolation in the elementary schools. The Board of Education also committed to an Elementary Redesign Plan that had as the primary objective balancing elementary enrollments and creating more racially balanced elementary schools. A third goal was to provide more choice for families as the district moved from having two magnet schools to eleven magnet schools. This initiative was to impact approximately 6650 students in grades 1-6 (MSAP Redesign Grant 2010, p. 57).

The MSAP grant provided needed funding for CSD's school reform plan. "CSD had proven before through grant applications, a strong track record of meeting students needs through the assistance of grant opportunities" MSAP, 2010, p. E3).

Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the research questions: "How did district leaders make a case for school reform? and "How did stakeholders' input compare to the district leaders' case for reform. Rorrer et al.'s (2008) framework was used to organize the data and inform the data analysis when describing the rationale for the reform that was in line with the CSD reform implemented to address the targeted goals (improve student achievement, decrease racial isolation in the elementary schools, and provide more choice for elementary families). The researcher found the district leaders approached school reform in line with Rorrer, et al.'s framework and examined CSD's school reform plan for making sense of and interpreting the district leaders' rationale.

Making a Case for School Reform

The General Education Provision Act in the MSAP grant stated CSD wanted to eliminate all barriers to an excellent and equitable education through the three goals stated above. CSD wanted to provide instruction that was research-based and focused on 21st century skills in order to increase engagement and achievement when offering choice schools for each elementary family (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010). The researcher used the framework of Rorrer, et al., 2008 when answering the first research question, "How did the district leaders make a case for school reform?" The researcher for the study looked at the four roles essential for districts involved in school reform: providing instructional leadership, reorienting the organization, establishing policy coherence, and maintaining an equity focus to analyze the rationale for the district's school reform believing these roles were in line with CSD's school reform plan.

An extensive literature review, the district's Magnet School Assistance Program Grant (MSAP), survey reports and comment cards were used to answer the research questions. Rorrer et al.'s (2008) framework stating district leaders are responsive and accountable to their stakeholders when implementing and sustaining change through school reform was used by the researcher to organize the data and inform the data analysis when describing the rationale for CSD's reform plan.

Rorrer et al. (2008) found that districts function as the dominant local governance structure for United States schooling, and that the district's instructional role in systemic reform was paramount when implementing and sustaining change. Rorrer et al. extended their research beyond what roles districts *have served* in reform to what roles districts *could serve*, including the nature of change in educational reform, particularly reform aimed at improving academic achievement and advancing equity.

The two components of Rorrer et al.'s (2008) framework involved district leaders including superintendents, other administrators in the district office, principals and assistant principals at the building level, and school board members acting as a single actor using the four essential roles (providing instructional leadership, reorienting the organization, establishing policy coherence, and maintaining an equity focus) in their school reform plans. The superintendents in Rorrer, et al.'s study instructed district and building level administrators to speak in one voice about the mission and goals of the their school reform plans.

The CSD's instructional leaders needed to reform the district and wanted to do so by looking at choice and equity for all elementary school students to ensure all students were improving academically. The researcher used Rorrer et al.'s framework, as a lens to examine CSD's approach including the four essential roles during the pre-planning and implementation of

their school reform. CSD's leaders were aware of a need to seek changes quickly because of increasing threats (low achievement for students of color, changing demographics, decreases in revenue funding, and isolated minority pockets in the elementary buildings) to the district's accountability status (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

Low achievement for students of color.

The first goal of CSD's school reform plan was to improve student achievement. The CSD Board of Education passed an equity policy with the elimination of the racial achievement gap as the primary objective (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

Changing demographics.

Changes in demographics for CSD had an enormous effect on the elementary buildings (facilities), funding for transportation, unbalance of enrollment at many schools, isolated racial pockets, and resources that included uneven distributions of technology (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010). The institutional leaders were critically aware that school reform was needed.

Located in a suburban-turned-urban district in a Midwestern city, serving 16,000 students, the MSAP grant provided CSD the opportunity to use research-based educational practices with 21st century skills to increase student engagement and achievement while offering school choice for all elementary families. Over a period of ten years, the CSD student population had seen a decrease of more than 3,600 White students and an increase of nearly 3,000 Black and Hispanic students since the 2000-2001 school year (See Table 1). English Language Learners, representing 47 different language groups, increased by 11 percent during the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years, and an overall 60 percent increase in the following five years (Magnet

Schools Assistance Program, 2010). In addition to the changing demographics and decease in achievement for students of color, CSD faced significant physical and financial challenges.

Table 1
CSD Ethnicity Population for 2009 and 2017

White	Black	Hispanic	Multiracial	Year
43%	39%	11%	8%	2009
25%	45%	22%	7%	2017

Changes in funding.

The legislature changed funding for the public school General Fund from a property tax funding stream to a sales tax funding stream. The economic picture that states and school districts faced made the sales tax funding difficult for districts to cover operational expenses. In addition to the sales tax funding, the state imposed tax caps to property taxes that had a direct impact on the district's Capital Projects and Transportation Funds.

Decreased revenue was a crucial reason for the CSD's MSAP grant application. "Reduced funding jeopardized the ability of the district to provide the level of marketing, professional development, and instructional supports required to successfully implement The Redesign Plan (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010, p. EO 2)." The MSAP grant would support the school reform plans by receiving three and a half million dollars each year for three years. CSD applied for an 11.8 million dollar federal Magnet School Grant to offer choice magnets in all of their elementary schools. School funding had changed dramatically over the past couple of years in this Midwestern state causing urgency for reform not only for CSD but for other districts as well.

State governments gather and distribute funds for schools through state sales and income taxes, lotteries, and property taxes. The tax caps from property taxes caused a substantial decrease in funding for school districts because homeowners were only required to pay 1% of the value of their home in property taxes, a benefit to the homeowner yet limiting the amount of money school districts could rely on for Transportation, Debt Service, and Capital Projects. CSD and many other districts in the state had to look closely at how they could cut the cost of general operations in their school districts (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010). This component of CSD's school reform was in line with Rorrer, et al.'s essential roles of reorienting the organization and establishing policy coherence.

Isolated minority pockets in the elementary building.

The second goal of CSD's school reform plan was to decrease minority isolation in the elementary buildings. The CSD Board of Education committed in an Elementary Redesign Plan that had as a primary objective balancing elementary enrollments and creating more racially balanced elementary schools (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

CSD understood one of the most crucial decisions a district could make was the implementation of a new program (Stein, 2004); therefore, the institutional leaders implemented The Redesign Plan to address the targeted goals (improve student academic achievement, decrease minority isolation in the elementary schools, and provide more choice for elementary families) (Magnet Schools Assistant Grant, 2010). The researcher in this study examined the CSD's school reform plan through the conceptual framework of Rorrer et al., (2008) believing that this school reform concept was in line with the school reform CSD had implemented to address the threats of low achievement for students of color and critical decreases in funding. The researcher found Rorrer et al.'s essential roles for school districts working in school reform

in line with how CSD's leaders approached school reform. CSD leadership teams were available during the open forums and school board meetings to share the districts' reform plans and to hold firm to a school reform plan that CSD leaders felt would benefit student achievement while addressing issues of equity.

Providing Instructional Leadership

Providing instructional leadership was the first essential role of districts in school reform (Rorrer et al., 2008). The two components of this essential role were generating will and building capacity. This essential role involved the instructional leaders' behavior as being proactive in supporting changing attitudes, increasing motivation for reform, and encouraging a stronger belief that improved teaching would lead to improve learning for all students. This role required superintendents and building level principals to know and understand curriculum and instruction. These instructional leaders needed to be visible in the schools and classrooms. They needed to provide satisfying instructional environments for teachers and desirable learning conditions and outcomes for students. Rorrer et al. found that a superintendent's role as instructional leader is to generate will and build capacity by educating the community and school board members about the educational services needed for high expectations concerning student achievement for all students (Rorrer et al., 2008; Daresh, 1991; Firestone, 1989).

During the 2010-2011 school year, CSD was scheduled to lose revenue funding from the General Fund targeted for professional development. The CSD's leaders anticipated the decrease in funding and added a request for professional development funding from the MSAP grant to support new learning for all staff teaching in the new magnet schools. The CSD documented in their grant the importance of identifying community partners to help with resources, supplies, materials, or revenue funding to support each magnet theme while also supporting professional development. Community partners around the city and state with skill sets and resources in the

areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), Environmental Studies, Arts and Music, and Communications and International Studies would bring needed knowledge, materials, and resources to all magnet schools. The MSAP stated:

> A commitment to developing school community partnerships is crucial and school leadership teams have taken responsibility for identifying community partners who could help support the magnet focus. Numerous partnerships have already been identified in preparation for the opening of school in August 2010 (MSAP, 2010, p. E2, 4).

The Redesign Plan offered themed schools for families on both the east and west sides of the district. The development of themes for both sides of the district created a need for marketing and advertising the school programs under the direction of a specialized district magnet coordinator's position to ensure each school offered an equally desirable program for parents when choosing a school. Marketing was targeted toward all parents in the district through community forums, parent meetings, and written materials sent to the homes. Giving parents information and access to information about the themes available to their children increased parent involvement in their choice options (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

All parents new to the district had to enroll their children at the parent intake center where staff was available to help parents select a themed school that connected to their child's interest or talents. Parent involvement in the selection process was a strategy CSD's institutional actors used to accomplish the three goals addressed in the MSAP grant (improve student academic achievement, decrease racial isolation, and provide every elementary family choice). "If parents had access to the process of selecting schools and support in identifying talents and interest of their children, CSD had implemented a parent involvement strategy" (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010, p. E4 6). The MSAP grant stated under the tab for *Selecting Schools Identified for School Improvement;* "Currently CSD has only one school participating in a Title I restructuring process. There are several schools on the verge of entering the process if results do

not improve" (p. EO, 7). The Cherry Hill Elementary restructuring precipitated the redesign of all the district elementary schools and because of the Title I sanctions, Cherry Hill Elementary received the greatest opportunity to maximize choice for the Cherry Hill Elementary students. Cherry Hill Elementary also had evidence of minority isolations in addition to low achievement scores for their students of color (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010). Therefore CSD set up the computerized selection process to favor the Cherry Hill Elementary students first (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

Rorrer, et al.'s framework found instructional leaders generating will involved a change in attitudes, motivation, and beliefs that underlie the institutional actor's voice (2008; McLaughlin, 1987). The CSD's leaders wanted the Cherry Hill Elementary students who had been attending a failing school to have the greatest opportunity in the selection process. Building capacity as defined by Rorrer et al. (2008) and Firestone (1989) involved a district's ability and capability to enact its will by actually implementing the school reform.

CSD documented through the MSAP grant roles for the superintendent, principals, curriculum directors, teachers, and other staff to build capacity and generate will in a nonlinear fashion under the tab, *Quality of Personnel for the Redesign Plan* for school reform. These district leaders represented the management chart for the district's reform. Rorrer et al. (2008) reported that the inter-relativeness of institutional actors acting as one, allows for multilevel responses and continuous movement of school reform. CSD's goals and strategies were available to all stakeholders with promises to improve student achievement through professional development, updated technology, updated facilities, specialized staff, and offering choice to their elementary families. Each instructional leader provided evidence of their knowledge, skills, and commitment of needed best practices through the MSAP grant. These instructional leaders

understood, agreed upon, and were capable of implementing The Redesign Plan at all levels (district, schools, and classroom). The MSAP 2010 documented these instructional leaders had a wealth of experiences with curriculum development, implementing successful desegregation strategies, special programs, best practices, budgeting, and technology.

The instructional and learning environments were addressed in the General Educational Provisions Act Statement (GEPA) submitted in the MSAP grant stating:

- All magnet schools will serve all students
- Student selection is computerized and will allow no bias in selection of students
- CSD will analyze gender enrollments to represent gender equity
- Special Education students will receive supplementary/support services
- Communication to homes will be in Spanish and English
- Translators will be available at all meetings
- Classrooms will include materials that are challenging and allow flexibility
- Classrooms will be culturally relevant and inclusive
- Activities will support multiple learning styles to support success for all
- Staff will follow the district non-discrimination policy (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010, p. EO).

In addition to the above statements mandating all staff support the district's school reform plan, The Redesign Plan, the CSD's instructional leaders' were required to attach their resumes to the MSAP grant under the *Assurances and Certifications* tabs. This documentation of instructional leaders' proven experiences in best practices needed in K-12 education required for instruction and assessment was documentation of their experiences and skills, and evidence of past successes. The researcher for this study found the CSD leaders were in line with Rorrer, et

al.'s essential role of institutional actors acting as one voice documenting by the General Educational Provision Act Statement to their stakeholders, families, and students; "The CSD leaders sought to eliminate all barriers to an excellent and equitable education for all students" (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010 p. EO). When providing documentation of their experiences in instructional leadership, the researcher for this study interfaced one part of the essential role of providing instructional leader from Rorrer et al.'s (2008) framework to the CSD school reform plan which also supported Honig's (2003) research that academic capital for school reform should include the central office administration's knowledge. These district leaders had documented their knowledge of best practices for their schools, an understanding of school policy, and the organizational system at large, and were instrumental in 'generating will' and 'building capacity', the two components of providing instructional leadership (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

Reorienting the Organization

Reorienting the organization was the second essential role for districts in reform (Rorrer et al., 2008) and required shifts in districts' structures and processes to support systemic reform to align the districts' beliefs, expectations, and norms. Reorienting the organization required CSD to examine curriculum, finances, professional development, and culture when refining their organizational structures and processes to accomplish their three goals (improve student academic achievement, decrease minority isolation in the elementary schools, and provide more choice for elementary families).

When refining and aligning organizational structures and processes, controlling and changing the district culture and technical core shows intentionality to changing and sustaining reform. The technical core of a district includes curriculum, instruction, goal setting, principal selection and evaluation, and funding. The district's culture includes norms, expectations, and

values that shape the district's professional community (Rorrer et al., 2008; McLaughlin, 1992; Peterson et al., 1987).

CSD's school reform plan was in line with a component of Rorrer, et al.'s essential role, reorienting the organization when the institutional leaders addressed staffing at the elementary buildings. CSD leaders wanted to rebrand the district and this was outlined in the second essential role of reform found by Rorrer et al.'s conceptual framework. The institutional leaders, by hiring and replacing staff to support the mission and monitor the technical core was in line with a strategy of Rorrer et al.'s essential role of reorienting the organization (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010). CSD hired a magnet school coordinator, an intake center assistant, a family liaison for each school, five specialists for each focus area, and shared substitutes for professional development absences. The district acknowledged the changing demographics over the last ten years which was in line with Rorrer et al.'s essential role, maintaining an equity focus by owning the current reality (data) and what it meant for the reform plan (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010 p. 10-12).

The district was in line with a component of the essential goal of Rorrer, et al.'s (2008) framework concerning reorienting the organization. CSD provided "clear lines regarding procedures on how to use the funds allocated by the MSAP grant and procedures for hiring staff and selecting students that were non-discriminating" (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010, p E2).

By reorganizing the district to emphasize choice for all elementary families, CSD leaders made sure that during registration "families had access to theme options with the support of the new student intake center" (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, p E3 5). The district-wide student intake center was instrumental in refining the selection process by educating parents on

selecting a themed school and supporting families in identifying their children's natural interests and talents. The CSD district's plan of offering full elementary magnet options for all elementary families was in line with Rorrer et al.'s essential role of reorienting the organization. CSD's goal to address the threat of state sanctions concerning the isolated racial pockets in some of the schools and the low achievement of their students of color was in line with Rorrer, et al.'s. (2008) essential goals of maintaining equity and reorienting the organization. The student intake center monitored all magnet schools reviewing race, gender, and grade placement to address the isolated racial pockets (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

The commitment documented in the MSAP grant to offer transportation to all families on both sides of the district, and eliminating bussing across the East/West boundaries was another way CSD was in line with refining the processes in the organization. The researcher's documentation from the MSAP grant referenced instructional leaders in the CSD had restructured the organization with a renewed commitment for more efficient transportation and an equitable student identification selection process that was in line with the Rorrer, et al.'s (2008) framework. The selection process monitored grade, race, and gender to ensure school enrollments were in an acceptable range between 650-700 students (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010). When a solution for a stronger transportation fund was established, CSD leaders looked at a plan to update facilities and provide more professional development opportunities for the staff (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

According to Rorrer et al.'s (2008) second essential role for school reform, refining organizational structures and processes was important. The researcher found the CSD leaders in offering magnet schools as a potential solution to accomplishing their three goals listed in the MSAP grant (especially the goal to improve achievement for students of color) were in line with

the Rorrer, et al.'s framework. Student achievement for students of color had been decreasing for the last ten years. When doing research for their plan to offer more magnets, CSD reported that in social studies, science, and reading students in magnet schools significantly outperformed their peers attending non-magnets (Bifulco, Cobb, & Bell, 2009).

Curriculum

CSD refined their organizational structure by offering unique and specialized curriculum when exploring and identifying themes for their eleven elementary buildings. The magnet programs offered were STEM, Spanish Immersion, International Studies, Communications, Environmental Studies, and Inquiry and the Arts. Each family could select from these choices and transportation would be provided for those according to the side of the district of their residency.

CSD leaders provided, through the MSAP grant, a commitment to increase technology not only for the STEM magnets all magnet schools. This implementation of technology available to all students included adding interactive white boards in every elementary classroom, new computer labs (both PC and MAC), communication studios, and Computers on Wheels. Community partnerships were requested to utilize community experts working in real life careers by offering support for each magnet program's focus. Professional development for all staff was organized around using technology as a tool to support reading, writing, and math.

In addition to using technology to enrich the learning in the classroom, other professional development was included as part of refining the academic process. Classroom teachers were expected to implement reading, writing, and math workshops; Response to Intervention (RtI); project-based learning; inclusion strategies; and the importance of 'Standards of Experience.'

CSD had offered several professional development opportunities for their teaching staff believing teachers with a strong knowledge of pedagogy were needed inside the classroom. The

authors of the MSAP grant had included expectations of best practices inside every elementary classroom based on professional development goals in the reform plan. Lillian Katz, an expert in early learning from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, spent several years on the CSD campus working with the elementary teachers prior to the Redesign Plan. Katz (2006) found children learn best by investigating, reasoning, and observing their surroundings. CSD exposed all elementary teachers to Katz's philosophy believing no matter what themed magnet school children were attending, their learning environment offered 'Standards of Experience.'

'Standards of Experience' represents the thinking of *schools providing experiences* known to benefit students instead of teachers just *delivering education.* Katz (2006) argued 'Standards of Experience' honors a child's mind, body, and spirit. When classrooms and education are designed for the *Mind of the Child:*

- Classrooms are intellectually engaging and authentic
- Engagement opportunities are interactions, discussions, and conversations
- Expectations and experiences are absorbing, challenging, and rigorous
- Environments allow students to be self-directed and life-long learners
- Environments allow students to take initiative and accept responsibility for learning
- Environments that provide a variety of learning opportunities
- Environments that allows thinking, application, and problem solving
- Teaching that provides an instructional match to students' learning styles

When classrooms and education are designed for the *Body of the Child:*

- Students learn through exploration
- Environments support learning through visual documentation
- Projected oriented students learn by doing and making connections to their real world
- Environments are warm, natural, and beautiful

When classrooms and education are designed for the *Spirit of the Child:*

- Educators celebrate the never-to-be-captured period of time and learning
- Environments encourage students to feels they belong to a peer group
- Environments are designed to nurture curiosity, wonder, joy, and love for learning
- Environments build confidence in intellectual powers and support questioning
- Teachers believe students are curious and capable

- Environments honor the social nature of learning (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010, p. E4 14-15).

CSD wanted all teachers to promote a child's understanding through curriculum and practice that supported emotional development and social competences no matter which themed program they were attending. Therefore, the district instructional leaders exposed all elementary teachers to Katz's philosophy 'Standards of Experience' and it was expected to be present in all elementary classrooms (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

Establishing Policy Coherence

Establishing policy coherence was the third essential role of districts in reform and required districts to mediate federal, state, and local policy, and to align resources by linking policy to needs and desired outcomes (Rorrer et al., 2008). Establishing policy coherence required the district to align external demands with internal demands (Rorrer, 2002). In addition to establishing and setting attainable goals and strategies to unify the whole, all resources should be committed to the agreed upon goals for school reform.

Price, Ball, and Luks (1995) found administrators both at the central office and at the building level are in position to affect the direction of resources around particular agendas; therefore, aligning resources opens up the capacity to enact reform for professional development, supplementary programs, specialized staff, and needed materials. Documented in the MSAP grant, CSD's instructional leaders acknowledged policy coherence under the budget and resources tabs vowing to align funding for adequate facilities, equipment, supplies, personnel, and professional development for school reform. CSD developed a detailed three-year budget using per pupil cost at $1,782 over the three-year grant window. These additional grant funds added to the Capital Projects funds would supplement The Redesign Plan. The funds of school districts are generated from different sources and can only be used in areas that have been previously designed. CSD had been using some Title 1 funds to support schools with high SES

levels and Child Care (before and after school care) funds for materials at the individual school level. Given the decrease in funding, CSD set district policy that required Title 1 funds to be re-routed to the Early Learning Centers and Child Care funds to be controlled by the district and not individual schools.

When establishing policy coherence, CSD leaders acknowledged tax caps on property taxes had a direct negative impact on the district's Capital Projects and Transportation Funds. These tax caps caused multi-million dollars of lost revenue for professional development, marketing, and instructional support needed for the implementation of The Redesign Plan along with an additional fifteen million dollar loss from the district's General Fund (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

Funding from the 11.8 million dollar MSAP grant and the district's Capital Projects funds guaranteed themed curriculum throughout the district would be aligned and implemented starting with signage for each building. Grant funding was used for outdoor labs and physical changes needed in each building, while Title 1 funds were later specified for the Early Learning Centers. The CSD leaders established components of policy coherence in line with Rorrer, et al. (2008) by aligning all resources to their needs and their desired outcomes.

Maintaining an Equity Focus

Maintaining an equity focus is the fourth essential role of districts in reform and this role, more recently according to Rorrer et al. (2008), is becoming an umbrella for the other three essential roles because inequities in education have persisted due to larger societal inequities (Hallinger & Heck, 1999). Maintaining an equity focus has two components: owning past inequity and foregrounding equity. The assistant superintendent of CSD, one of the actors speaking in one voice, acknowledged the achievement gap and how the student population in the district had rapidly changed. The White students were continuing to demonstrate skill mastery

but African-American and Hispanic students were struggling academically. This trend had been consistent over the past decade. In 2000, White students represented 64% of the enrollment. Now CSD had 42% White, 38% Black, and 11% Hispanic (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

In owning their data and acknowledging the trends, CSD leaders were transparent when confronting an increasingly troubling reality related to how they educate their students of color. CSD was not meeting accountability by state standards and were facing sanctions from Title 1 standards because of low student achievement for their students of color and their isolated racial pockets of students in some elementary buildings. Rorrer (2001) and Skrla and Scheurich (2001) found districts are successful in disrupting and even displacing institutional structures and practices that perpetuated inequity when there was transparency of data and ownership of past inequities. In order to qualify for the MSAP grant, a school district had to acknowledge a need to reduce isolated pockets of minority students, a need to increase student achievement, and a commitment to magnet schools.

Each of the four essential roles districts use in school reform circle around to recast and connect to the others. CSD leaders illuminated the importance of an equity focus in their school reform plan and how important that focus was to their goals for school reform (improving student academic achievement and removing isolated racial pockets in the elementary buildings) during their rapidly changing student population (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

CSD leaders made a commitment to maintaining an equity focus in line with Rorrer, et al. (2008) with a primary goal of implementing a system to assist all families in understanding and navigating the choices available to them using community forums (building meetings), parent centers, Connect Ed phone calls, flyers sent home by students in both English and Spanish, and

written material mailed to all families. There was also a commitment to maintaining equity with the development of a computerized admittance process for each magnet to reduce minority isolations in the elementary buildings, and a district-wide student intake center to assist families in aligning a student's natural interests and aptitudes to a magnet focus. Special consideration was given to schools with isolated racial pockets and schools with low student achievement (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

The institutional leaders acting as one actor wrote the MSAP grant that targeted three goals in their school reform, The Redesign Plan. The aggressive attempt by the CSD's instructional leaders to market all themed schools to encourage families to select a magnet program were in line with some components for Rorrer, et al.'s framework.

CSD's organized institutional actors were in line with Rorrer, et al.'s (2008) essential roles of reorienting the organization, establishing policy coherence, and maintaining an equity focus by encouraging all families to participate in the process (MSAP, 2010). The CSD's leaders were also in line with Rorrer, et al.'s framework by providing a selection process (computerized program) to monitor placements of students at each school by grade and race (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

Two of the three goals (improve student achievement and decrease racial isolation in the elementary schools) addressed in the MSAP grant were threats to CSD's state accountability status. One elementary school was already under sanctions from the state and more schools were to follow because of poor student achievement. When focusing on the essential goal of maintaining an equity focus, CSD leaders "considered equity first and choice second" (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010, p. EO). The demographics of the district were changing, and the students enrolling in the district were students representing a racial group that the district had

been failing academically. The one school in the district already assigned to restructuring by the state, was given the greatest priority in the computerized admittance process (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010). The CSD families attending Cherry Hill Elementary School received the maximum number of choice spots at other schools to ensure students had priority to choose away from Cherry Hill Elementary.

In addition to poor student achievement, this same school had high isolated pockets of Hispanic students in first, third, fourth, and fifth grades and isolated pockets of Black students in third, fourth, and fifth grades. To control and stop these trends, CSD leaders adjusted the boundaries for this school and aggressively marketed to Hispanic and Black families with the goal of reversing the racial isolation (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010). This strategy used by CSD reflected an equity lens suggested by Rorrer et al.'s, (2008) research. In order to remove the minority pockets, the families, in this school with low achievement and isolated pockets were given priority in the selection process (MSAP, 2010).

In continuing with maintaining an equity lens and preparing students from isolated pockets to join other schools, CSD documented in the grant a goal for promoting and maintaining diversity (all CSD students, regardless of race, would feel welcomed and accepted at any of the eleven district magnet schools). Focusing on equity, CSD leaders found helping new and current families identify their children's talents and interests could place students in schools with high student interest leading to improved academics (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

Stakeholders' Response Concerning School Reform

It was evident the threats (poor student achievement, changing demographics, and isolated racial pockets in the elementary buildings) CSD had experienced the last ten years required the institutional leaders to look at school reform. The district leaders sought help from

the research center at IUPUI on two different occasions to help direct their school reform using the interviews and input from their stakeholders. The second research question to be addressed in this chapter is, 'How did stakeholders' input compare to the district leaders' case for school reform?' This research question will be answered first by using data from the IUPUI surveys (during the pre-planning of the Redesign Plan) provided by the MSAP grant coordinator and reported out by the institutional leaders to their stakeholders.

Secondly, the research included data via comments gathered from stakeholders regarding The Redesign Plan. These comments (over 700) represented general comments, suggestions, requests, and clarification from district stakeholders. These comment cards were categorized in themes by the researcher that included curriculum, programs, transportation, middle schools, east/west boundaries, sixth graders, performing arts professional development, grandfathering, and budget. Some of the comment cards addressed pushback concerning the focus on equity and school choice in the CSD's reform plan.

Some stakeholders argued they were being victimized, that their children's school would deteriorate in quality and that they should be entitled to remain in the single elite magnet in the district. Stakeholders, as resisters to the proposed redesign, employed arguments aligned with DiAngelo's (2011) description of White Fragility.

Data collected during the 'pre'-Redesign Plan was gathered from IUPUI during 2006-2007 and presented to stakeholders in three formats during the 2006-2008 school years. The sources include:

- IUPUI Survey Research Center (2006);
- IUPUI Survey Research Center (2007);
- Phase I Report - Leadership and Learning Center (October 2006-April 2007);

- Phase II Report- EXCEL: Excellence Through Committee Education & Learning (May 2007-December 2007);
- Phase III Report- Redesigning Elementary Schools: The Power of Choice (January 2008-October 2008).

Data sources from stakeholders 'after' the district's decision for school reform, The Redesign Plan, were in the form of 700 comment card and emails. These sources (pre-school reform plan and 'after' the decision to implement The Redesign Plan reform) were all gathered from the CSD's director and were used by the researcher of this study to provide answers to research question two.

The researcher did document components in line with Rorrer et al.'s (2008) framework given the findings of the IUPUI survey responses from stakeholders 'before' the district started reform. Yet, to further analyze themes from stakeholders 'after' The Redesign Plan was unveiled, the researcher, through a lens of DiAngelo (2011), used her framework of White Fragility. The CSD district leaders offered choice to families under the equity lens as a solution to their inequities caused by the first magnet school in the district, Elm School Magnet. The history of this first magnet is explained later in this chapter.

The pre-reform stakeholder input addressed major concerns from the stakeholders. Themes from their narratives first referenced the curriculum. Parents wanted more relevant courses offered to their children like taking Spanish as a foreign language and promoting more math and science classes. There was also a concern for more remedial programs and special needs programs. Comments from stakeholders included; "Can there be more Spanish classes at every building?", "My three sons have been in high math classes every year. Will there be

teachers who can teach high ability math classes?", " Our district needs to push Science the same way we push reading." and "We need more STEM schools."

Secondly, parents also mentioned administrative policies concerning security, safety, and discipline. Some parents mentioned more attention to cultural diversity within the schools followed by support for uniform dress codes to eliminate an escalation of students trying to outdo each other. Comments from parents included; "How will disruptive students be addressed who are taking learning away from others?", "How will my special needs son be supported in an environmental school?", "Will all students be accepted in every magnet school no matter their race or lunch status?" and "Can CSD start a dress code so all students will fit in better?"

The third area of concern was class size. Many parents felt classes in the district were too large. This issue tied directly to the above concern about remedial classes and more support for special needs students. Comments from stakeholders included; " My third grader had 27 kids in her classroom this year, that is too many!", "My son has an IEP, but he is still behind. What resources can you give him next year in 4th grade?", "I had trouble with math in school and now my daughter is having trouble. Can she get more help after school?" and "I have been trying to get my older son tested. Why is it taking so long?"

Another major concern was about teachers. Parents wanted more teachers trained to teach remedial and special needs students, and some mentioned increasing teacher's salaries to increase the quality of teachers drawn to the CSD.

There was a response rate of 42.5% for completed interviews. This was calculated by dividing the number of completed interviews by the number of eligible respondents in the sample with a sample error of +/- 3%. The cooperation rate of 61.2% was the proportion of all completed interviews of all eligible respondents ever contacted. The refusal rate, the proportion

of all respondent interview refusals or break-offs of all eligible cases was 26.9%. The contact rate, the proportion of all cases in which a household's respondent was contacted was 76.6%.

CSD reported the findings from IUPUI to the stakeholders that led to the school reform proposal plan in three phases. Phase I conducted October 2006- April 2007 focusing on balanced enrollment committee work. Phase II conducted May 2007-December 2007 called EXCEL: Excellence Through Committee Education & Learning focusing on choice, balanced schools, equal access, communication and other (academic rigor, behavioral expectations, cultural competency) Phase III was called 'What to do?" and was conducted January 2008-October 2008 focusing on defining choice, balancing enrollment, and elementary program emphasis.

Given the findings from the IUPUI research center that families from diverse population were contacted and their input was documented, the district leaders at CSD heard curriculum was a concern and parents wanted more relevant courses for their children. By offering choice programs with specialized curriculum in each magnet school parents would feel their comments were addressed. Class size was mentioned as a concern from the stakeholders therefore CSD leaders put an a selection process for all magnet schools that would monitor the schools by enrollment and the classroom by grades to make sure all schools fell within the district's expectations. Stakeholders mentioned teacher training was a concern. CSD addressed this issue by guaranteeing all elementary teachers were exposed to the same professional development mentioned in the MSAP grant. The last major concern addressed by the stakeholders dealt with school safety and discipline. As mentioned in the MSAP grant, the CSD leaders believed if families had a choice in their child's education, families would be happy and children would enjoy a school that supported their talents and interests. This environment of choice and options

would lead to classroom filled with students involved in enriching and engaging environments with less discipline and behavior concerns (Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2010).

Resistance to Change as a Form of White Fragility

Once the district leaders proposed a Redesign Plan, they began holding town hall meetings to answer questions and solicit parent feedback. In this section, the parent feedback was examined in comparison to the district's espoused rationale for the Redesign Reform Plan. The researcher, found that while the parent feedback drawn from over 700 comment cards, and pertaining to the Redesign Plan, was mostly negative or critical especially from the parents who were attending the first district magnet school, Elm Elementary, it did reinforce the district's concern about inequity across schools. As the first families in the first magnet program in CSD, the Elm Magnet families had a reality that was unique to them.

The CSD's focus on equity in the grant proposal, and in the related reform components, was in many ways reinforced by the push back the CSD received from the Elm Magnet School families. Therefore, to provide an understanding of the thinking of the Elm Magnet families, the researcher felt a need to provide some history about the first CSD magnet school.

Elm Magnet School was the first and only Magnet School in the CSD for over 20 years. Elm Magnet School re-opened under the truest of definitions of magnet in 1986, to encourage families from one school to voluntarily move to another school. Sadker and Sadker (2003) reported the first magnet schools were started in the 1970s and by 1983 one third of larger urban school districts had magnets. The opening of the Elm Magnet School seemed to be timely with what was happening in other parts of the United States as many magnet schools across the country looked for ways to desegregate schools.

Many magnet programs had unique curricular themes and were designed to encourage families to leave their neighborhood school for a program so enriching and well worth any

distance from a family's home neighborhood. This was the goal of the institutional actors in CSD planning for the Elm School Magnet.

The Elm Magnet School was an empty building closed for over 10 years when the area southeast of the district was declining in growth. Most of the residents surrounding the Elm School neighborhood school lived in older homes, mobile home parks, and apartment buildings. To encourage families in the growing areas of the district, the superintendent invited parents to embrace a creative approach to instruction with a school theme involved in science and technology, and interdisciplinary student experience. To qualify, a student needed only have an interest in science and technology and the Elm Magnet School teachers would provide extensive experiences with computers, thinking skills, and the exploration of nature while attention would be given to individual progress and learning styles. The superintendent informed the community that the Elm Magnet Program was designed for students of all ability levels but *not* for special student populations.

The Elm Magnet School brochure explained participants would come from a pool of students with a *positive* attitude from the Creekside District and preference would be given to siblings. Enrollment would be balanced by race, gender, and grade. Parents with an interest in volunteering, was also part of the student selection process. The CSD superintendent needed families excited about a cutting edge science school to travel to the opposite side of the school district (with transportation provided) in a residential area that looked different from their current resident (single family homes).

Once enrolled in Elm Magnet School, the families answered the invitation to volunteer inside the classroom and for special school events. After only five years of existence Elm Magnet School had earned 25 school awards (state and federal), several outstanding teacher

awards, and many parent volunteer recognitions. Elm Magnet School had a 24:1 ratio of student to teacher, one language represented (English), 12.31% of the students receiving special education services, and 8% receiving free or reduced lunches.

Elm Magnet School offered outstanding enrichment programs for their students that included outdoor activities supported with a Dad's Club charged with building a log cabin, a pond, and a bridge on their campus. The students at Elm Magnet School were also exposed to a science curriculum that was enriched by an attached wetland, in-school studio enabling students to deliver morning announcements, handheld computers, and Mac and PC computer labs with full time teachers to instruct students in how to use the latest in technology.

After only eight years of existence, Elm Magnet School received several other major school awards. Even though Elm Magnet School had a predominantly white enrollment with the socio-economics make-up of middle and upper class families, the parents boasted about a special award received from 'America's Best Schools' because Elm Magnet School had embraced diversity and earned high academics. The demographics at that time included: 81.3 % White students, 14.0% Black, 1.1% Hispanic, 3.6% Asian, and 1.8% American Indian. In addition, there was a 23:1 student to teacher ratio; 98.17% student attendance rate; 100% student promotion rate; 97.9% stability rate; 82% rate for students involved in extracurricular activities; and 90% of Elm Magnet School's parents were volunteers inside the classroom, involved in parent organizations, and hosting and supporting special events (See Table 2). After ten years of existence, Elm Magnet School was a Four Star School with the highest student achievement scores in the district.

Table 2
Ethnicity for Elm Magnet 1996

White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	American Indian	Parent Participation	Student Attendance	Students Extra/Cur
81.3%	14%	1.1%	3.6%	1.8%	90%	98.17%	82%

The Elm Magnet families saw no need to change or alter their school. The reform plan caused an interruption to the reality of what was normal for these Elm families. DiAngelo (2011) found Whites live primarily segregated lives in a white-dominated society. They receive little or no authentic information about racism and are thus unprepared to think about it critically or with complexity, leading to pushbacks when their lives are threatened. These Elm Magnet School families' resistance revealed what was at stake for them using a discourse of 'lessening quality,' 'whiteness as reality and entitlement,' and a 'discourse of victimization' (DiAngelo, 2011). Whiteness as referenced by DiAngelo is a set of locations that are historically, culturally, politically, socially, and intrinsically linked to relationships of domination. Whiteness and property of race according to DiAngelo are interconnected and co-produced. These parent responses highlighted the equity issues across the district that the institutional leaders wanted and needed to change.

The Elm Magnet School families felt the reform of the district was a loss for their families because their school's excellence would not be available to them any longer. Hess (1998) found without accountable, daily relationships it is possible to become enclosed in spaces that insulate White people from racial awareness. The Elm Magnet School families did not see the need to change their school even with the promise to open a sister school on the other side of the district.

Hess's (1998) and DiAngelo's (2011) research illuminated White Fragility as habitus, a formation into which dominant culture invites White people to participate. 'White Fragility' powerfully reinforces white supremacy, all the while erasing routes to awareness of itself. 'White Fragility' erects barriers within White people that push off opportunities for engagement with other communities and offers an excuse for avoiding proximity (Hess, 1998). The researcher in this study found this to be certain when re-theming cards from the categories of Angry, Cultural Classrooms, East/West, Elm Magnet, Equity/Inequity, Grandfathering, Socioeconomics, and Rigor.

Parent feedback revealed multiple examples of 'White Fragility' (DiAngelo, 2011) from parents who viewed the redesign as a threat to their students' privileged space in the top magnet. This happened in three ways: by questioning the maintenance of quality through integrating schools; by expressing a "white reality/entitlement" by insisting magnet families be grandfathered into their chosen school; and by engaging a discourse of victimization by alleging the district was betraying them.

The researcher categorized over 700 comment cards and email statements to analyze the second research question concerning stakeholders' input. The comments were organized in twenty-nine categories. The researcher re-themed categories to refine the themes that only pertained to choice options. New themes emerged from this re-theming that included; lessening quality, whiteness as entitlement, and victimization. The researcher used the research of DiAngelo (2011) for a deeper critical analysis to make an equity case using the lens of whiteness as property and 'White Fragility.'

The researcher noticed the push back of the stakeholders (from their comment cards) who had been given the promise for their children to always be able to attend Elm Magnet School (the

first magnet school in the district) from the inception of their child's enrollment in the program. These parents were vocally upset with the districts' goal to fix inequities at the cost of their inequity (not grandfathering their children). The researcher identified the White stakeholders' voice with the concept of 'White Fragility' (DiAngelo, 2011)

DiAngelo's (2011) research found White people pushback on school reform that threatens their comfort (their property) because many times White people are not consciously aware of their surroundings because they see their 'whiteness' as property. DiAngelo defined 'whiteness' as multi-dimensional with three components; whiteness in a location of structural advantage of race privilege; whiteness as a place from which White people look at themselves, at others, and at society as a 'standpoint'; and whiteness as a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed. According to DiAngelo, "White Fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves" (2011 p. 54).

Lessening quality.

One theme that surfaced when re-categorizing the comment cards referenced the idea of, 'lessening quality' identified by (DiAngelo, 2011). This example of 'lessening of quality' is also described by Vodde (2001), "If privilege is defined as a legitimization of one's entitlement to resources, it can also be defined as permission to escape or avoid any challenges to this entitlement" (p. 3).

The White stakeholders with children enrolled in the first magnet program complained the districts' rationale of subtracting for one group to add to the larger group (a district embracing more diversity) was an inequity (to them). The White stakeholder comments, "Not grandfathering the students already in the program will be discarding my children's needs" and

“Allowing new neighborhood students in the program, will cause the teachers to slow down the curriculum to catch up the students new to the program.” were examples of lessening quality. DiAngelo reported when White people live in a white-dominated society they are unprepared or unwilling to think critically about inequities.

White stakeholders from Elm Magnet felt that their resources were being limited. They had worked as partners (90% parent volunteers) with the teachers at Elm Magnet to make it a successful and highly recognized school. These Elm parents felt their school’s success was the result of their own efforts and not related to White privilege. Mills (1997) and Ryan (2001) found the existence of structural inequality undermines the claim that privilege is simply a reflection of hard work and virtue; therefore, inequalities must be hidden or justified as resulting from lack of effort. Their comments included: “Our school will show drops in achievement because of these changes” and “The school curriculum will change and be less competitive.” These comments support the belief that new families at Elm Magnet would lessen the quality of what was already a part of an excellent school.

Other stakeholder’s comments echoed racial integration as a threat to their current status in the only historical magnet program in the district when commenting that CSD would be less competitive with other surrounding suburban high socioeconomic districts. These White families felt by dismantling a school and not grandfathering students who had been successful in the first magnet program was harmful for their children because their school had been the only school where all students were enjoying high achievement. This first magnet school had been a Four Star School celebrated by the state since inception. DiAngelo (2011) explained that whiteness shows itself when White people make comments that include sentiments regarding a threat to quality or competiveness.

When White families enrolled their children into the first magnet program, the parents volunteered regularly to support the teachers making sure students were learning the challenging science curriculum. Talented, committed teachers working in tandem with committed and caring parents brought state recognition to the school every year. The students in the first magnet school earned high student achievement equal if not higher than suburban areas with higher socio-economic levels than the CSD schools. The parents felt an ownership in the academic success of the children, and enjoyed the family friendships that grew over the years working together on many school social events.

Families enjoyed spending time with the school families and never missed or noticed the lack of racial diversity at their school. DiAngelo (2011) found White people are taught what is normal and do not see or notice when they are only around other White people. According to Franken, Lee, and Orfield, (2003), White people live segregated lives in physical proximity to people of color, yet segregation occurs on multiple levels including representational and informational. When white people live in a white-dominated society, they receive little or no authentic information about racism and are unprepared to think critically about inequities. White parents can only reflect on their own needs (DiAngelo, 2011) as documented in their comment cards that reflected their anger when they were denied grandfathering and their suggestions as solutions to providing their own transportation were not granted.

Whiteness as reality and entitlement.

The second theme referenced by DiAngelo (2011), is 'Whiteness as reality and entitlement' explains that White people enjoy their racial comfort and they are not happy when stretched out of their comfort zone. The Elm families felt they had the most to lose by the Redesign Plan

altering and dismantling their school. These mostly White parents felt their opinions and comments are worthy of the district's consideration and implementation.

DiAngelo (2011) found White people live in a social environment that protects and insulates them from race-based stress. Fine (1997) explained that the insulation is how whiteness accrues privilege and status. In CSD's reform plan, CSD leaders took ownership of their data that the students of color were not showing academic growth like the White students, and that the demographics in the district were changing rapidly causing racial pockets in some elementary buildings. This ownership generated responses from White stakeholders that reflected anger, withdrawal, emotional incapacitation, guilt, argumentation, and cognitive dissonance.

The comments made by the Elm families not wanting change challenged the strategies the CSD offered as solutions, and these parents offered their own solutions as to not disrupt their own reality. These Elm families suggested duplicating and not disbanding their school, allowing parents at Elm to provide their own transportation, adding portable classrooms for additional space, and grandfathering those students who had been enrolled from 1^{st}-5^{th} grades. One comment asked about the rationale for an East/West split, suggesting a North/South split.

Comments like those reveal the reality of the Elm families and according to DiAngelo (2011), White stakeholders give off constant messages that they are more valuable and more important than people of color. The comment from the one stakeholder suggesting a North/South split revealed a lack of caring or consideration for the district as a whole. In reality, a North/South split would have caused the district to become even more inequitable because families in the southern part of the district were from a lower socioeconomic level than the families in the northern part of the district.

These comments from the Elm families were given without any consideration for other schools in the district because White Fragility is a symptom of structural racism which confers systemic privilege upon White people (DiAngelo (2011). These messages from White people operate on multiple levels and are conveyed in many ways including history text books, media and advertising, role-models, heroes and heroines, and also everyday discourse on "good" neighborhoods and "good" schools and what the people look like in those neighborhoods and schools (DiAngelo, 2011; Johnson & Shapiro, 2003).

Elm Magnet families being forced to leave their school felt victimized. These families were responding to the articulation of counter narratives. This discourse of victimization enables whites to avoid responsibility for the racial power and privilege they wield in their everyday lives.

Discourse of victimization.

The third theme referenced by DiAngelo (2011) is called 'Discourse of victimization.' This is where stakeholders feel betrayed at any calls for changes as an act of inequity toward them. Elm parents voiced that the district leaders had lied to them and called this reform a reverse inequity. The Elm parents commented that these institutional leaders were going back on their promise by not grandfathering the students already in the program and saw these changes as another disregard of their needs.

The Elm parents were angry and lacked trust from these district office administrators. They wanted the reform plan to be slowed down and questioned the integrity of the leaders making these decisions. They were the victims complaining that no real research supported this reform plan and even called the administrators liars. If all elementary families were given a choice on where their child should attend school, how could district leaders remove the 'Elm'

choice from them? To these parents, there was no equity by un-grandfathering what was promised. These parents asked the question, if they were the only parents wanting grandfathering why not give them what they wanted? These comments from the Elm parents were examples of 'White Fragility.'

According to DiAngelo (2011) White Fragility is a state where even the minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable for White families. Racial stress for White people results from an interruption to what is racially familiar to them. These comments from the White stakeholders, according to DiAngelo's (2011) research, caused racial stress resulting from an interruption to what is racially unfamiliar to these families. The Elm parents were often at a loss at how to respond in constructive ways when their environments were being challenged. DiAngelo found Whites have not had the need to build the cognitive or affective skills that would allow for constructive engagement across racial divides.

Bourdieu (1993) found people have sets of dispositions responsible for their perceptions and practices. A groups' habitus, their socialized subjectivity, reflects how the actors in these groups interact with each other and the rest of their environment. White Fragility can be conceptualized as a product of how people respond in their continued social and material advantages in their white position (DiAngelo, 2011).

Viewing White anger and defensiveness, in response to issues of race through the framework of White Fragility, helped the researcher frame the data analysis looking at school reform focused on equity and choice. The equity lens reinforced what the CSD grant proposal and reform plan addressed as urgent goals to target in their community. These equity pieces were in many ways reinforced by the push back the district received from the Elm parents who

represented White privilege and higher middle income families. These families' resistance revealed what was at stake for CSD through the DiAngelo framework.

Chapter Five: Implications

Introduction

Confronting the pressure to stay within state compliance and to avoid any additional restructuring from the state, CSD implemented The Redesign Plan with goals to improve student achievement, reduce isolated racial pockets, and offer choice to all elementary families. In this chapter, the researcher discussed the implications of the results on practice, policy, and research concerning school reform using magnet themed options.

The chapter brings a conclusion to this study by addressing answers to the research questions and offering a discussion of the implications from the findings. The two questions; How did district leaders make a case for school reform? and How did stakeholders' input compare to the district leaders' case for reform? were answered using the frameworks of Rorrer, Skrla, and Scheurich (2008), DiAngelo (2011), and data from the CSD stakeholders, documents from IUPUI Survey Center, and the Department of Education.

In the literature review for this study, the researchers argued that school choice is and has been taken up by reformers as a popular strategy for school reform. Even though popular, The Report from the National Working Commission on Choice in K-12 Education (2000) found choice should be as much about 'how' and 'how much' as it about 'whether'. Hill (2010) argued school choice was complex and conditional, not simple and if there were successful school choice programs, these successes are uneven and the results were subtle. CSD was one of the first districts to turn all their elementary buildings into choice magnet schools.

The researcher for this study looked for interfaces from the CSD's Redesign Plan that were in line with Rorrer, et al.'s (2008) framework, Institutional Actors acting in one voice for school reform. The Rorrer, et al. framework was used to find similar characteristics in the Creekside School District's reform plan in line with four essential roles for school reform and to answer research question (How did the district leaders make a case for school reform?).

Districts as instructional actors in educational reform.

District leaders approached the reform in line with parts of Rorrer, Skrla, and Scheurich's (2008) characteristics of institutional actors in educational reform using the four essential roles of districts in school reform; providing instructional leadership, reorienting the organization, establishing policy coherence, and maintaining equity.

Providing Instructional Leadership

The two components of this essential role were generating will and building capacity. This essential role required superintendents and building level principals to know and understand curriculum and instruction and to be visible in the schools and classrooms.

CSD documented through the MSAP grant roles for the superintendent, principals, curriculum directors, teachers, and other staff to build capacity and generate will through a management and flow chart connected to the district's reform plan. New professional development, updated technology, updated facilities and specialized staff members were ways of generating will and building capacity.

Reorienting the Organization

Reorienting the organization required shifts in the districts' structures and processes to support systemic reform to align the districts' beliefs, expectations, and norms (Rorrer, et al., 2008). CSD was in line with reorienting the organization by examining curriculum, finances, professional development, and culture when refining their organizational structures and processes to accomplish their three goals (improve student academic achievement, decrease minority isolation in the elementary schools, and provide more choice for elementary families). CSD refined their organization by offering unique specialized curriculum to match each magnet school, transportation to each magnet by families' residency, a selection process to ensure school enrollments were in an acceptable range between 650-700 students without isolated racial pockets in the elementary schools.

Establishing Policy Coherence

Establishing policy coherence required districts to mediate federal, state, and local policy, and to align resources by linking policy to needs and desired outcomes (Rorrer et al., 2008). CSD was in line with establishing policy coherence when setting attainable goals and strategies and aligning resources to accomplish the goals.

Documented in the MSAP grant, CSD's instructional leaders acknowledged policy coherence under the budget and resources tabs vowing to align funding for adequate facilities, equipment, supplies, personnel, and professional development for school reform. At the district level, all Title 1 funds and Child Care funds were aligned and controlled to support the school reform plan.

Maintaining an Equity Focus

Maintaining an equity focus has two components: owning past inequity and foregrounding equity (Rorrer, et al., 2008). CSD was in line with this essential role by designing school reform around equity and choice. Owning data was acknowledged by CSD when the district did not meet accountability by state standards and were facing sanctions from Title 1 because of low student achievement for their students of color and their isolated racial pockets of students in some elementary buildings.

CSD was also in line with Rorrer, et al.'s framework by applying for the MSAP grant. In order to qualify for the MSAP grant, a school district had to acknowledge a need to reduce isolated pockets of minority students, a need to increase student achievement, and a commitment to magnet schools. The second framework used in this study was White Fragility (DiAngelo, 2011). The framework and the comment cards from the Elm Magnet parents provided answers to the second research question in this study (How did stakeholders' input compare to the district leaders' case for reform?).

White Fragility.

DiAngelo (2011) found White people in North America live in a social environment that protects and insulates them from race-based stress. White Fragility involves; lessening quality, whiteness as reality and entitlement, and victimization. The researcher for this study looked at DiAngelo's research to address the resistance the Elm Magnet families exhibited because of CSD's reform plan and to answer research question two (How did stakeholders' input compare to the district leaders' case for reform?).

Implications of the Findings for practice

The researcher found there were still challenges (changing demographics and isolated racial pockets) CSD faced in the 2016-2017 school year six years after the Redesign Plan. The challenges and the findings from this study offer implications for practice.

Implication for practice might address how teachers in these new themed schools embraced instruction for new students who were enthusiastically excited about the school's theme as well as the students who were enrolled in the school because it was their assigned neighborhood school. Implication for practice could be more attention on macro and micro levels of support for teachers inside the classroom negotiating new technology and new curriculum in their daily lessons. Another implication for practice might be including more classroom teachers in the shared decision–making process on how specialized staff work along side teachers at the school level and in the classroom.

Teachers and principals have information at their levels that could be beneficial to district leaders when planning school reform concerning phasing-in or phasing-out curriculum, instruction and specialized staff. Teacher and principal input when networking with other educators inside the building and with educators at their sister school might benefit implementation of new teaching strategies and the sustainability of organizational structures in school reform.

Implications of the Findings for Policy

The findings from chapter four documented CSD had become more diverse with isolated racial pockets still present at some schools and SES levels with more students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. Implications for policy at the local, state and federal agencies could address; How states allocated funding for the district looking at inequities when experiencing rapid demographic changes.

Districts like CSD had knowledge of demographic changes from past years but might not be able to predict how rapidly new change will alter their district's structure. Another implication for policy might be how to adjust the funding offered through the Magnet Schools Assistance Program Grant for districts with rapid changes in demographics?

Blankstein, Noguera, and Kelly (2016) and Noguera (2003) argued instead of presuming that all schools can be treated the same, state and federal officials should recognize that socioeconomic conditions within a local context can act as significant constraints limiting possibilities for local control of schools. Without the power and resources to exert control over schools, low-income communities cannot be expected to hold their schools accountable to solve the vast array of problems confronting students and their families on their own. Unless states enact measures to mitigate the effects of poverty and racial isolation, local control will remain little more than a guise through which the state can shirk its responsibility for ensuring all students have access to quality education (Noguera). This implication for policy might be especially interesting to pursue as the department of education statistics documented CSD like many other suburban fringe districts are experiencing changing demographics and isolated racial pockets.

Implications of the Findings for Research

Do culture and institutional legacies have any links to successful school reform plans? Implications for research could be directed at schools similar to Elm Magnet going through a loss of identity with changes resulting from school reform. Exploring research on how to rebuild a school's culture and unique identity that the stakeholders believed was lost because of school reform would be an important direction for future research. Research that followed the parents

who stayed at Elm Magnet and/or parents who were forced to leave could be helpful to districts. Where are these parents now? Did the stay (inside the district) or leave for private school, charter school or simply move out of the district?

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Resume

Doris Downing

Employment

Adjunct Professor - Marian University	2012-present
Principal – Metropolitan School District Lawrence Township in Indianapolis, IN	2003-2011
Adjunct Professor – Texas Tech University Lubbock, Texas	2002-2003
Principal – Metropolitan School District Lawrence Township in Indianapolis, IN	1986-2002
Assistant Principal – Metropolitan School District of Washington Township Indianapolis, IN	1985-1986
Teacher – Indianapolis Public Schools Indianapolis, IN	1975-1985

Education

Ed. D in Educational Leadership at Indiana University	2017
Elementary Administrative and Supervision License	2014
IPLA – Indiana Principals Leadership Academy	Group X
M.S. Elementary Education – Indiana University	1978
B. S. Elementary Education – Marian College	1973

Professional Experiences

Facilitator for TLA (Teacher Leadership Academy)

Facilitator for IPLA (Indiana Principals Leadership Academy)

Facilitator for Stephen Covey – Highly Effective People

Presenter for NCASE – National Congress on Aviation and Space Education

Presenter for Indiana Space Grant Consortium – Purdue University

Hosted YAC – Young Astronauts Conference with the support of several active astronauts

Awards

Mother Clarissa Dillhoff Award for Distinguished Achievement in Mentoring

Awarded the Greenleaf Scholarship from Delta Kappa Gamma International Society for Key Women Educators

Indian Creek Elementary School – Indiana Four Star School
Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township

Hosted the Magnet Conference of America – Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township

Allisonville Elementary School – State Blue Ribbon School
Metropolitan School District of Washington Township

Awarded Principals' Lilly Grant – Educational Leadership Award